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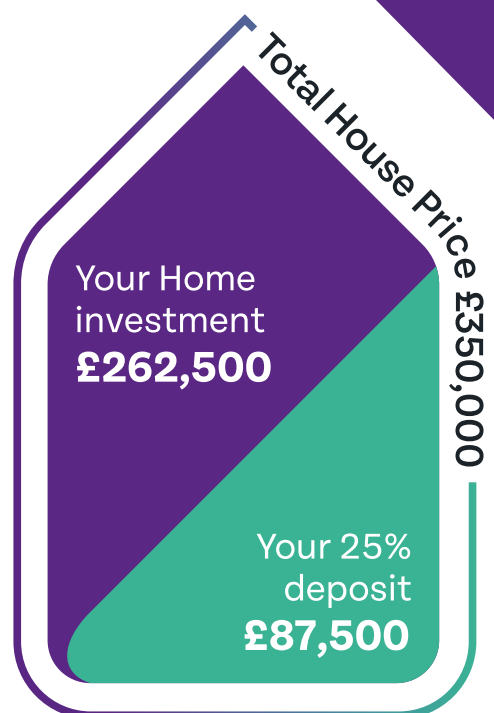
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# START AS WE MEAN TO GO ON

What a crazy start to the year it has been. January and February have been full of meetings, and I've been lucky enough to meet and work with some amazing and inspirational businesspeople.

The Northern business community provides a network of likeminded entrepreneurial people who all want to continue to learn, grow and support one another in creating new opportunities. It is just one of the reasons why we are so lucky to call the North East our home.

Since announcing that we will now become a bi-monthly publication we've welcomed more interest than ever before – so thank you to all who have enquired by picking up the phone, sending me a message on LinkedIn or via email. I can honestly say I still get excited every time someone contacts us with feedback, enquiries or signs up to our mailing list!

As well as more interest from advertisers, we have also continued to grow our online readership, in addition to our established print readership. Our strategic print distribution will continue throughout the year, as we maintain our direct and personalised mail-outs to an established database of the region's key decision makers, local influential people and business owners, we will also continue delivering to local businesses, hotels and places of high footfall and homes within the most prestigious residential areas across the North.

Our digital footprint continues to grow, with more people engaging with our socials. Our website traffic also continues to grow monthly – and our digital mailing list grows daily. We are incredibly dedicated to growing our readership and in creating

a strong and relevant audience for the businesses which are featured in Portfolio North.

The content within this edition is outstanding. We have a wide range of lifestyle, property and business features, thought leadership articles and some of the biggest and most significant recent news to come from the North. I am proud to feature some of the most successful businesses in the region including The Inn Collection Group, a £10m investment from Sage and trailblazing local authority projects from the City of Sunderland.

We also have an outstanding collection of lifestyle features including an interview with the renowned two Michelin star restaurant Raby Hunt owner and chef, James Close, a feature on island hopping around Thailand in a superyacht by West Nautical, garden designs by nationally renowned expert Steve Harris and a review of the Bentley Continental GT Speed by our motoring editor, Adam Gray.

We always get such excellent feedback on our content, it's simple, clean and to the point. We understand our readers and the content they want – creating a platform which our partners and advertisers can be sure will be interesting, relevant and engaging for their target audience.

We are also proud to have aligned with our partner organisation Bradley Hall in pledging our support to Marie Curie's Newcastle Hospice and Heel and Toe Children's Charity. We will be continuing to

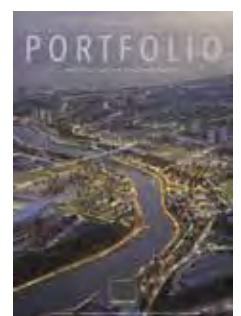
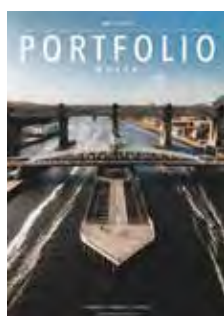
support both charities throughout the year with coverage in the magazine and various content on our platforms – as well as with the big Bradley Hall Festive Fundraiser at the end of the year.

Thanks to such an excellent start to the year for Portfolio North, I am so excited to see what the rest of the year will bring. There's a wealth of opportunity out there for everyone – with many businesses having fantastic news and achievements to share. After a strange and uncertain end of 2021, we're finally starting to see a prosperity and a buzz around local enterprise again. New developments are being announced as our ever-changing built environment evolves – while new opportunities to live, work and socialise continue to crop up across the region.

We are also really looking forward to branching out into new projects this year – so continue to watch this space for updates.

Thanks again to all for your continued support and I hope you enjoy this edition of Portfolio North.

**Cassie Moyse**  
Director  
Portfolio North



# PORTFOLIO

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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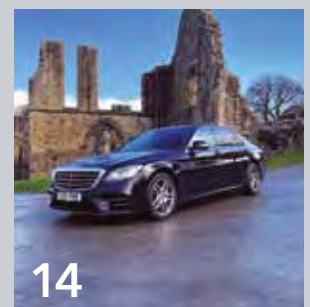
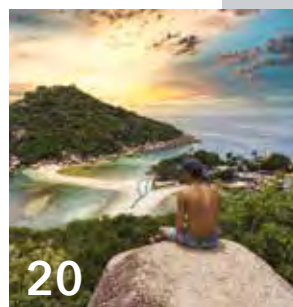
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# Twenty One Questions with James Close

Owner and Chef at the Raby Hunt

## PROFESSIONAL

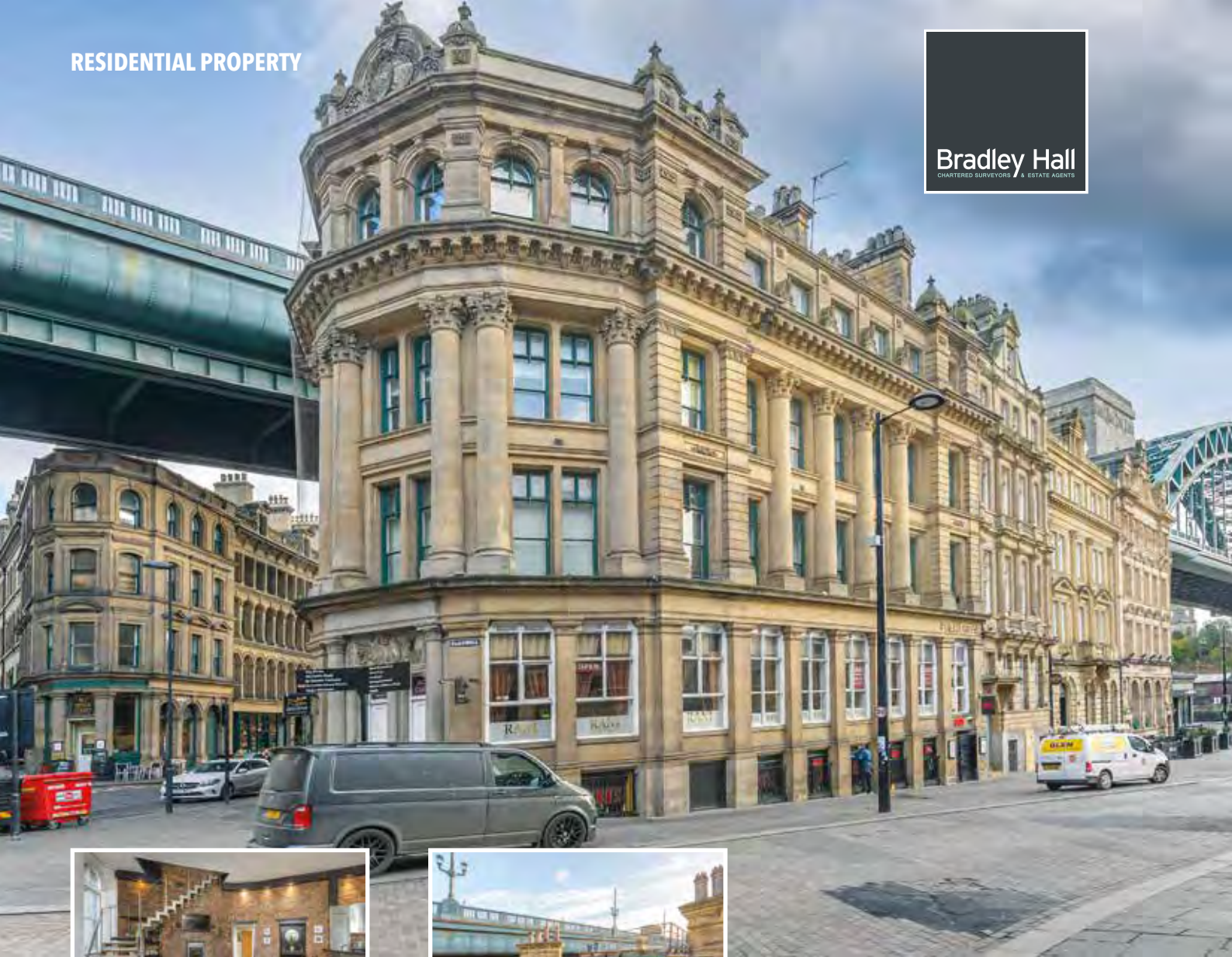
- 1. What is your proudest business achievement?**  
It has to be getting the second Michelin star, it was incredible to hear that news and also to be the first restaurant in the North East to achieve that. It's ten years this year since we got the first star so to then get a second was amazing.
- 2. What do you feel are the fundamental challenges which our economy is currently facing?**  
The biggest challenge facing the economy in terms of our business at present is definitely the staff shortages. It's a huge problem across the industry; getting chefs that you can rely on. There's a lot of people who are just jumping ship and moving around constantly, which doesn't do their career any good in the long term. The constant increase in the price of ingredients is also a huge issue.
- 3. Describe your business in three words**  
Creative, challenging – delicious!
- 4. What book or podcast should every professional read or listen to?**  
I don't really listen to podcasts but any chef should really read of the French, classic books, the longstanding ones which have been the foundations of our industry. Also those by any chef that has three stars, people like Gordon Ramsay.
- 5. How has the industry changed throughout your career?**  
There's definitely been a huge change in the number of hours that we work. The industry has really taken on board the importance of a good work life balance. We don't even open for lunch, which means everyone has time for interests and leisure time outside of work.
- 6. What is the best piece of professional advice you have been given?**  
Because I'm a self taught chef and haven't worked anywhere else but The Raby Hunt, I haven't really been given any professional advice other than from my dad, who told me to make sure that you keep your overheads as low as possible.

- 7. Who is someone you look up to?**  
The people I look up to are sportsmen at the top of their game – people like Tiger Woods and Lewis Hamilton who are absolutely committed to being the best they can be.
- 8. What were your career ambitions in early life?**  
My earliest ambitions were to be a professional golfer, I wanted to be a European Tour player but after five years I realised I was never going to be good enough so I had to think about a different career.
- 9. What professional knowledge do you wish you had known in the earlier stages of your career?**  
Because I didn't go to college, in the early days it would have been really useful to have had some proper training in classical cooking techniques. Then again, if I had done, I might not be doing what I do now and have been brave enough to develop my own food and my own style.
- 10. What regularly motivates or inspires you?**  
The people who motivate me the most are, again, sports people, who are at the top of their game. The people that simply never give up, that go through difficult times but come out the other end
- 11. How would you describe your career path so far?**  
Unfinished! It's been great to have had this level of success but it's all down to really hard work and I'm still motivated to do better.
- 12. What does a normal day look like for you?**  
At the restaurant we do different things on different days so we are ready for when we open. For example on a Monday we would look at what we need to order, then when it arrives the following day I would check it all for prep on Wednesdays. It's also up to me to ensure that everyone is motivated and concentrating on their tasks, because our guests quite rightly expect such a high standard.

## PERSONAL

- 13. Which three renowned people, either present or historical, would you like to have dinner with?**  
Lewis Hamilton, Jim Morrison and Paul Bocuse. Lewis Hamilton could drive us there, Jim Morrison could sing This Is The End and Paul Bocuse could cook us his signature, bresse chicken. Now that would be a night to remember!
- 14. What are your personal goals for this year?**  
I want to create a really dynamic kitchen team where we can all develop together and hopefully that will encourage more people into the industry.
- 15. Do you have a secret talent?**  
I can do a great dog voice which I use to talk to Heston, our terrier.
- 16. What do you like to do to unwind?**  
Watch sport, drink wine, go for a walk, eat in restaurants.
- 17. Describe yourself in three words.**  
Driven, funny, sarcastic
- 18. What is your greatest weakness?**  
My wife says it's that I nap too much!
- 19. If you could travel to anywhere in the world right now, where would it be?**  
To Megeve in France to go skiing.
- 20. What's the best 'life lesson' or piece of life advice you would give to someone?**  
Whatever you choose to do in life, make sure you give it 100 per cent.
- 21. How would you define success?**  
Being able to achieve that perfect balance of being able to be happy and relaxed without worrying because you've managed to be successful – but at the same time never take it for granted.





## PHOENIX HOUSE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

**GUIDE PRICE £395,000**

 x 2     x 1     x 1

The New York loft in Newcastle City Centre. Exposed brickwork, real wooden floors and views over the city from every window.

This penthouse duplex is located on the top floors of Phoenix House, Queen Street, on Newcastle's Quayside. Neighbouring establishments include renowned eateries and public houses such as Dobson and Parnell, Simla, Khai Khai, the Bridge Tavern & Aveika.

Internally, the open plan kitchen/living/diner takes centre stage with high ceilings and eight arched windows offering

views over the city. There is one en-suite bedroom on the same floor, with a further bedroom, shower room and study area on the floor above.

Also on the top floor there is an access door to perhaps one of the most extraordinary roof terraces in the City. Set across two levels, the lower level provides a sheltered space which historically has been used for barbecuing, entertaining and sunbathing. The upper level almost abuts the Tyne Bridge, and offers a unique outlook on some of the City's architecture.

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# WENLOCK ROAD SOUTH SHIELDS

**GUIDE PRICE £1,200,000**



Seldom does the opportunity arise to acquire this exquisite residential properties following complete and extensive modernisation by the current owners. Wenlock Road is situated in the popular area of Simonside, South Shields. Simonside benefits from fantastic transport links with the Metro Station a short walk away and the A19 is accessible both north and southbound.

Internally the house shows no compromise and does not disappoint with a tiled central reception hallway that leads to the formal dining room, downstairs cloaks and main lounge. The hallway

opens onto the grand kitchen/living area. The kitchen has an extensive range of units and an island with breakfast bar. It comes fully equipped with a selection of appliances, including two ovens, microwave and two wine fridges. The utility room benefits from wall mounted floor and wall units. Off the kitchen there is an office, games room and split-level gym with a pitched ceiling and spotlights. There is Celine Bluetooth speakers in the kitchen, master bedroom and the gym.

To the first floor there is a master bedroom and en-suite with a walk-in shower and dressing room. The landing

provide access to 4 further bedrooms with built in matching furniture such as wardrobes and dressing tables. One of the bedrooms benefit from an en-suite with a free-standing bath. The main bathroom benefits from a jacuzzi bath and walk in shower.

To the rear the garden benefits from extensive grounds, mainly set to lawn together with a summer house incorporating a newly fitted kitchen and shower. Adjoining the summer house there is a large, detached garage block which can house up to 4 vehicles in tandem.



**Durham**

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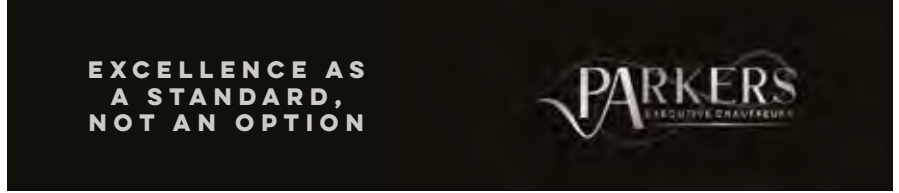




# REDEFINING THE CHAUFFEUR EXPERIENCE

Parkers Executive Chauffeurs is an award-winning executive travel company based in Newcastle and working throughout the UK. They provide the highest quality journeys and vehicles for a vast range of clients.





Established more than 20 years ago, and since then, the company has developed its presence and reputation as the leading executive travel provider in the North of England, by continuing to listen and adapt its services for the ever-changing needs of its clients.

The current owners, husband and wife team, Laurence and Gemma Beck have worked in the transport and B2B industry for many years. Since the takeover three years ago they have rapidly expanded the business and its fleet offering, all amidst a Pandemic too. Teamwork is a very important part of their business ethos, each member of staff is valued and works collaboratively to keep standards at their highest throughout the organisation, providing a quality service that goes above and beyond at the forefront of everything they do. They really do care about the little details!

Within the last year Parkers Executive Chauffeurs have been awarded two National Awards: Silver in Chauffeur Company of the Year and a Bronze Award for Environmental. Both within the Professional Driver QSI (Quality, Standards, Innovation) Awards, which is the main award for the entire chauffeur industry throughout the UK. An outstanding achievement for the Parkers team!

Parkers Executive Chauffeurs are committed to continuous professional development for their team and have some of the most highly trained Chauffeurs within the UK. With these unique skills they have rapidly become known as 'Convoy Specialists' offering a much higher level of skill than most Chauffeurs, to their VIP clients. They are often required to travel in convoy with a Police escort and have been privileged to be asked to transport Royalty, Presidents, World Leaders, and many more during the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

An office window with the view of a luxurious private jet landing is provided most days for their Chauffeurs, with the exhilaration of being airside with private jets and helicopters coming into the private airfield at Newcastle.

They transport many High Net Worth individuals and thrive on the high level of expectations set upon them. Their clients always come back time and time again and often comment that the service they provide is far superior to any previous chauffeur experiences they've had.

Going above and beyond with the service they provide is not the only attribute Parkers Executive Chauffeurs holds high. They have made huge commitments to sustainability and saving our planet. They were the first chauffeur company within the UK to offset their entire carbon footprint by planting trees within a government assured scheme, The Woodland Trust. They have now also made huge investments into updating their fleet with hybrid and electric luxury vehicle options.

Their current greener fleet boasts an exquisite hybrid Range Rover Autobiography and two Mercedes Benz electric EQV 6 seaters. They also have an order in for a highly sought after, brand new top of the range, Mercedes Benz EQS. They're very committed to helping other businesses offset some of their own carbon footprint by using their services too. They own an extensive fleet of vehicle options but whether you choose to opt for their electric/hybrid vehicles or the more traditional Diesel engines you can be assured your entire journey will be carbon neutral. Helping to save the planet

one mile at a time!

It's in the hearts and minds of Parkers owners that they want to help local charities and give something back to their community. NE Youth is at the forefront of the offering for their support, they provide opportunities for local young people to engage in a diverse range of activities and programmes that enable them to be involved, enjoy and achieve. Parkers also strongly support a local cricket club with adult and youth cricket teams alongside many other donations to local clubs and events.

An exciting part of Parkers Executive Chauffeurs job is regularly transporting Celebrities, Music Artists, Footballers, TV and Film Stars. They have received outstanding testimonials within the past year from many Clients. One in particular to be noted is Location Location Location TV Presenter Phil Spencer who states "they easily fit in with the rest of the production team, often going above and beyond what would normally be expected of them. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend them to anyone looking for a top quality chauffeur service provider."

To see more feedback about the service they provide have a look on their website [www.parkerschauffeurs.com](http://www.parkerschauffeurs.com)

You could also stay up to date with their activities through their Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn social media accounts.







# BROOMHOUSE STEADING

## CHATTON

Stunning barn conversion

**GUIDE PRICE £570,000**

 x 4
  x 4
  x 2

Bradley Hall is delighted to welcome to the market this modern barn conversion nestled within the picturesque Northumbrian countryside to the outskirts of the charming village of Chatton. This truly stand-out property occupies a prominent plot in the centre of the development and benefits from serene views of the sweeping countryside.

The village of Chatton is a quaint village located within the heart of the Northumberland countryside, situated approximately 10 miles inland of the

beautiful Northumberland coastline at Bamburgh at the foot of the Cheviot Hills. Chatton benefits from a small local shop and the highly regarded Percy Arms public house which provides an excellent food and drinks service, perfect after a day exploring the hills. Road access to the property is good with the A1 and A697 within a short drives distance.

This fantastic property is finished to an impeccable standard both internally and externally. Recently converted from stone farm buildings, this delightful family

home perfectly blends sleek, modern elegance whilst incorporating some of the buildings original framework and features into its unique design. Buyers should look no further for the perfect example of modern luxury living within a traditional, tranquil setting.

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# PICKTREE MANOR

## PICKTREE VILLAGE, WASHINGTON

### Elegant Five Bedroom Detached Home

**GUIDE PRICE £2,250,000**



Seldom does the opportunity arise to acquire what is thought to be one of the most exquisite residential properties, developed by the current owners, in the northeast of England. This elegant dwelling has been lovingly extended offering an impressive range of quality internal fixtures and fittings which include some delightful fire surrounds, bespoke handmade furniture and kitchen units as well as a sweeping Cantilever staircase which sweeps around the back of the house offering exquisite views of the rear gardens via the floor to ceiling glazed central inserts. This is a truly magnificent property and one which deserves the title of being a modern mansion oozing in luxury whilst still retaining the feel of a family home with central limestone tiled reception hallway providing easy access throughout.

Internally the house shows no compromise with the huge double solid doors leading into the fully glazed central reception hallway with its impressive

sweeping 'Cliff Chapman' staircase who is famous throughout the world and boasts the creation and design of the famous staircase in Tiffany's New York. The home oozes quality with every turn from the internal door finishes, lighting, luxury fitted dining kitchen and made to measure carpets. The central hallway provides access throughout and to the fully fitted cloaks/wc, the formal reception rooms being the dining, drawing room, lounge as well as to the dining kitchen and to the west wing the fully fitted 'preparation kitchen' a study and a delightful garden room. All the rooms to the rear elevation have French door leading to the extensive stone sun terrace. At the end of the corridors of the west wing there is a snooker room with access up to pool and games room and fully fitted bar.

This impressive stone built modern mansion sits proudly in the centre of over 1 ½ acres of formal grounds being accessed via impressive electrically operated wrought iron gates having

stone and pillared sides leading to a sweeping lit driveway and central turning circle presenting the property to any incoming visitors. To the front elevation the gardens are mainly set to lawn but inter-dispersed with a range of mature trees with hedgerows to the boundary providing a high degree of seclusion and privacy. Within the front garden there is also an all-purpose tennis court with paved viewing gallery and fencing to the boundary. The driveway sweeps from the impressive pillared front entrance as well as leading round to solid oak electrically operated gates and stone wall leading to the exit of the property itself. The mature grounds also include a range of planted bushes providing foliage and flowers throughout the year.

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SCAN ME



## HAWTHORN COTTAGE

### MORPETH

**GUIDE PRICE £525,000**

 x 4    x 2    x 1

Bradley Hall is delighted to welcome to the residential property market this impressive stone built four bedroom detached family home occupying an elevated mature plot within easy reach of the town centre. This lovely family home has been the subject of much sympathetic renovation and has been extended over two storeys by the present owners, it now provides generous accommodation spread over two floors offering a contemporary mix of original features alongside modern conveniences.

From the entrance hallway with oak flooring, solid wood doors lead to a study, utility room and a cloakroom, to the front the modern kitchen offers a good range of 'shaker' style units at base and wall levels, timber worktops and part tiled and part paneled walls. Integral appliances to include four ring induction hob with extractor above, double oven and grill unit, dishwasher, 1 & ½ bowl stainless steel sink unit with mixer tap, tiled floor and double glazed windows to the side and rear.

The open plan dining room has oak flooring, vertical radiator, feature cast iron fireplace and be-spoke corner turning staircase to the first floor, secondary glazed original crittall windows.

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# THREE PERFECT DAYS

## Island hopping in Thailand on a Superyacht

Thailand, one of the world's most visited tourist destinations. This paradise is filled with tranquil beaches, exotic cuisine, spectacular temples with interesting historical stories, remote islands, some of which are only accessible by boat, and magnificent scenery.

There is no better way to see the world than aboard a private superyacht, with the sea breeze in your hair and a gorgeous new island destination to visit each day. For those looking for the ultimate getaway, chartering a yacht can allow you to go further afield and discover completely remote anchorages and private beaches.

With a dedicated Captain, crew and chef, all of your requirements will be catered for down to the most intricate of details and you can simply enjoy cruising the stunning islands of Thailand.

The best time to visit Thailand is between November and early April as this is the driest and warmest time of the year with temperatures ranging between 32 and 36 degrees Celsius. You will be able to enjoy up to nine hours of sunshine every day, this gives you plenty time for sunbathing or partaking in a variety of water sports activities.

The islands of Koh Tao, Koh Pan Nang and Koh Samui are yacht charter paradise, offering the perfect balance of relaxation and activity you would want from any holiday.

Here are some of the best experiences you can enjoy on each of these glorious islands.



WEST NAUTICAL

Get in touch with West Nautical today to help plan your Thailand adventure.

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## Koh Tao

Koh Tao, which means Turtle Island, is the best diving destination in Thailand. This 21 km<sup>2</sup> island is filled with white sand beaches and many hills to enjoy views from, on a morning hike. When diving, you will be able to enjoy colourful coral reefs and a spectacular range of sea creatures, including turtles of course. This island is definitely one for the diving bucket list.

If you like pina colodas and consider yourself a foodie, the choice of restaurants and night life on the island is ever growing and you will find a variety of cuisines and restaurant styles to choose from.

Koh Tao is only accessible by boat so why not cruise in to one of the many anchorages in style on your own private yacht.



## Koh Pha Ngan

This unspoilt island is Thailand's fifth biggest island and is located just 12km from the Koh Samui, 70km from the mainland.

You will be able to enjoy lush tropical jungles, long white sand beaches and similar to its neighbouring island of Koh Tao, enjoy any one of 20 dive sites. This island is well known for its Full Moon parties, turning the beaches into open air festivals to dance the night away. There is also a lovely strip of restaurants one street back from the beach to enjoy a quieter evening sampling Thailand's exciting cuisine.

Koh Pha Ngan's must-do activities will allow you to spend your holiday enjoying the natural beauty of the island. From beaches to waterfalls to viewpoints at the top of its many hills, this piece of paradise is very special with unique natural beauty.

The best way to enjoy the crystal-clear water is to be anchored in one of the island's many secluded bays, spend the afternoon paddle boarding or sipping your favourite cocktail on board.

## Koh Samui

Koh Samui is the biggest of the three islands, explore this island on a scooter, visit a coconut plantation or enjoy an afternoon at an incredible elephant rehabilitation sanctuary.

When chartering a yacht in this stunning part of the world, Angthong National Marine Park is a must see. This untouched archipelago of 42 islands features limestone mountains, luscious jungle, pristine beaches, waterfalls and hidden coves. You are sure to see some exotic wildlife and sea creatures and enjoy a true 'get away from it all' feeling on your yacht charter holiday.

If you are more interested in history, there is a wide variety of activities and sights to see including mummified monks and the famous Big Buddha, which is especially impressive at sunset.

As one of the world's most exotic and exciting locations, Thailand should be high on anyone's bucket list.











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# LOCAL GYM WIN NATIONAL AWARD

Club Zest, a ladies only gym in Sunderland has been named as Ladies Only Gym of the Year at the National Fitness Awards 2021.





The award was the latest in a string of wins for co-owners Holly McBride-Donaldson and Jennie Moyle following their acquisition of the business in November 2017. They have since won eight awards in the last five years, six local and two national awards.

Holly McBride-Donaldson has been with Club Zest for twenty years, originally starting out as a receptionist then being promoted to manager in 2002. She is now the co-owner of the gym with Jennie Moyle, who has been a trainer with Club Zest for seven years, working as a gym instructor and personal trainer for three years before acquiring the business alongside Holly in 2016.

Holly said: "When the previous owner announced back in May 2016 she was retiring and wanted to give Jennie and I the opportunity to purchase the business I knew it was an offer we could not pass up. I've never ever seen myself working anywhere else because the club and members mean so much to both of us.

"Being part of Club Zest is being part of a tight-knit community. Together, we all partake in group challenges, trips away and charity fundraising. We have previously raised £10,000 for local charities, including The Bradley Lowrey Fund, Wearside Women In Need, Breast Cancer UK, St. Benedict's Hospice, Sunderland Soup Kitchen and Sunderland Royal Hospital."

Club Zest has a dedication to supporting the local community and the needs of its client base. Jennie has supported a variety of women over the years through her teaching. Member of Club Zest, Frances Smith said: "In 2017, I suffered a major stroke which despite months of rehabilitation has left me with some long-term disabilities. Joining Zest has made such a difference to my physical and mental wellbeing.

"I was unsure if I would be able to become a member because of my physical disabilities but the team at Zest took their time to get to know me, and what my strengths and weaknesses were. Going to

zest gives me a purpose and something positive I can focus on to continue to help my recovery. Zest is more than just a gym to me, it is a community that is inclusive, caring and fun, which I am so grateful to be part of."

Jennie said: "There are different memberships at the gym available, to suit the needs of the individual. However, all memberships include an induction and regular progress checks. This is all part of the process involved in helping members to achieve their personal fitness goals. The induction includes a full health analysis and a chat about the lifestyle habits of the individual.

"An individual program is then created for the person with clear and realistic expectations, and they are supported by an instructor until they are confident with the use of the gym."

Holly and Jennie's first port of call as owners was to completely refurbish the gym, spending £12,000 on renovations to give the gym a more modern style to match their new approach. They celebrated the refurbishment with a grand re-opening, to which regular members of the gym attended, as well as interested members of the public. Since then they have continued to invest money into the business, introducing new equipment and redecorating. Another factor in Holly and Jennie's new mission was to extend the opening hours of the gym, opening at 6am and putting on early morning classes in order to become more easily accessible for the members.

Natasha McDonough, Chair of Sunderland Area of North East of England Chamber of Commerce and MD of MMC Research & Marketing has been a member of the gym for over six years. She said; "Congratulations to Club Zest and its owners Jennie and Holly who have put Sunderland on the national map for the organisation's holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

"I am delighted that Holly, Jennie and the team have been recognised for the fantastic work which they do within

the Sunderland community and their dedication to supporting local women. I am a proud member of the gym and can wholeheartedly say that this award is very much deserved."

Holly said: "I wanted to make my own changes, offer more services and create a wider community. I wanted to build on an already successful club."

A variety of fitness classes are also available every day of the week. Jennie said: "The classes include popular and well-known forms of exercise, such as Yoga, Spinning, Pilates and Zumba. But if you are after something different and want to try out a new way of getting fit, there is also the inclusion of new fitness trends, such as Piloxing, which is a blend between Pilates and Boxing, Pound which is a form of cardio using weighted drumsticks, Retro Aerobics, Clubbercise, and much more."

Government guidelines and forced closures of gyms certainly created challenges for the team at Club Zest, but the resilience and dedication of the team allowed them to continue supporting members throughout with digital classes and a personable, friendly and bespoke approach with their members. Jennie said: "It was a difficult time for us, but we got through it and are so happy to see our members back in the gym. We want to hugely thank Sunderland Council for supporting us with grants."

Winning the National Fitness Award for Ladies Only Gym of the Year is a huge achievement for Holly, Jennie, and Club Zest as a whole. Holly said: "We are delighted that the club has been recognised for providing health and wellbeing support to local women and look forward to continuing."





# Dream Garden Designs with Steve Harris

Steve is a qualified garden designer, dedicated to and passionate about creating bespoke gardens that encourage a more social, outdoor lifestyle. He is a Pre-Registered Member of the Society of Garden Designers (SGD), the professional body for the Garden Design industry.

Trained at the prestigious London College of Garden Design at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Steve has had the opportunity to work alongside and learn from some of the most acclaimed designers in the industry, as well as working on several RHS Chelsea show gardens. He is passionate about sustainability and his modern designs combine contemporary styling with suitable planting to increase biodiversity and encourage wildlife whenever possible.

Based in Newcastle upon Tyne, he frequently seeks design inspiration from the wider landscapes of the North East, from Northumberland National Park to the North East coastline and across to the Lake District; his beautiful creations exhibit a sensitivity to, and understanding of place. Time spent living in Australia has given Steve an appreciation and

understanding of the extent to which gardens and an outdoor lifestyle can impact upon both mental and physical health, improving your quality of life. When appropriate, he enjoys integrating these Australian influences into modern 'outdoor rooms'.

Before training in garden design, Steve worked in Project Management and is comfortable working closely with clients on the development of the design brief, liaising with landscapers and suppliers, and then monitoring the creation of the garden to high quality standards.

Whether you are building the house of your dreams, renovating an old property, adding an extension or breathing life into an existing garden, Steve can well and truly make your outdoor space stand out and become a space to enjoy. Garden makeovers and adding items such as an al fresco kitchen, elegant terrace or a stylish summerhouse could also add value to your property.

Many home surveys have shown that a well-designed and maintained garden can add up to 20 per cent onto your property's value.

Steve offers a range of garden design services that may range from simply putting together a planting design to inject some fresh ideas into a single border, or a full design for your entire garden with beautiful sketches, detailed 3D drawings, intricate plans and scaled construction details for landscape contractors to build from.

We design gardens of all sizes and types from large rural spaces to smaller urban gardens or courtyards. Steve designs gardens of all sizes and types from large rural spaces to smaller urban gardens and courtyards. Steve is happy to work on either private residential sites for the homeowner or collaborate with architects, builders or property developers.

The process starts with an initial consultation so that Steve can see the garden, get to know you and understand your requirements, followed by working out what the ideal outdoor space means to you with a tailor-made solution that best meets your needs.

## IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING

By reclaiming your outdoor space, you can create your very own sanctuary for slowing down, recharging and re-engaging with the natural world. Regular contact with nature lowers stress levels and improves wellbeing. With the aid of a little creative thinking, a space can be created that inspires relaxation and stimulating conversation.

## HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Did you know that in the UK, gardens cover a combined landmass that's bigger than the Lake District and Peak District put together? This means that what we do with our gardens can help towards creating a better environment for humans and wildlife to thrive in. This could be providing food and habitat for insects and wildlife through to reducing your carbon footprint by growing some of your own food produce.

## CONSULTATION

Usually held at your home/garden this lets us get to know you, the garden space and analyse the site a little – a critical starting point for all our projects. The aim is to understand your wish list for the garden so we can add our thoughts and ideas to help stimulate discussion. A detailed site analysis will be carried out. From this, a written brief is developed along with a Design Fee Proposal for our services with an explanation of how the process will work and what the costs will be.

## DETAIL DESIGN

After you have had some time to consider the initial concept, any amendments you want to make will be captured in a further detailed masterplan. Depending upon the level of design detail in the scheme, we will then develop additional construction drawings, specifications and other technical drawings. Hard landscaping materials are also finalised at this stage.

## SURVEY

Depending upon the size and complexity of the site, a topographical survey of your garden may be required before progressing to the next Outline Design stage. This allows us to accurately consider any existing structures, trees/plants, drainage, level changes etc. A qualified land surveyor should be appointed to carry out the survey and we can help in finding and appointing a suitable land surveyor if you wish.

## PLANTING DESIGN

We produce detailed planting plans and schedules (lists) used to source the required trees and plants from some of the best nurseries in the UK. Although this ordinarily forms part of the Detailed Design package, this is also a service we can provide independently of any garden redesign for a fixed fee.

## OUTLINE DESIGN

Using the brief and site analysis, together with the topographical survey of the garden, I will develop a concept design tailored to your needs. This will be presented to you at your home and will typically include plan drawings, mood boards, samples of materials and sketches or 3D visualisations. The aim of this presentation is to stimulate discussion around the proposal which will allow the design to further develop and evolve into a final design that fully meets your needs.

## TENDERING & MANAGEMENT

Each completed design scheme will usually go out to several reputable landscape contractors with the drawing package and specifications, to provide a quotation on the build costs. Their quotations will be analysed and we will produce a written tender report highlighting any concerns and the merits of each. Once the creation of the garden starts on site, there are various options available to have us manage the ongoing progress on your behalf.



For more information visit  
[www.stevharrisgardendesign.co.uk](http://www.stevharrisgardendesign.co.uk)





The illuminiFacial treatment is the newest trend in the ever-evolving world of beauty and aesthetics.

# Studio Aesthete: illuminiFacial Treatment

After being invented by Lynton, the UK's number one laser and IPL manufacturer, this unique treatment performed using specialist skincare and powerful, medical-grade machines – all made by Lynton, has become hugely popular.

Studio Aesthete is a holistic, private cosmetic clinic based in both Newcastle and Sunderland. They are a Lynton Approved Clinic, meaning they can offer the illuminiFacial service within their clinic, alongside other Lynton treatments.

The illuminiFacial is a skincare treatment that 'enhances the natural filter' of the person. The end result is to dramatically improve skin tone, rejuvenate, enhance, and illuminate the clients natural beauty.

The treatment is accomplished by using a four-stage process in one sitting. The first step is a deep cleanse, using a specialist formulation. This will remove any dirt or impurities from the skin.

The second step is the Tri-Fruit Acid Peel, which is applied to your skin for between three and ten minutes. The peel allows the skin to rejuvenate, decongest and be primed for the next step of the treatment.

The third step is the Lynton IPL, which is an Intense Pulsed Light treatment using

the medical-grade Lynton machine. This step helps to stimulate the collagen in your skin and targets any damaged areas of your skin, such as discolouration, pigmentation, vascular breakouts, and redness.

The fourth and final step of the treatment, is to hydrate and protect the skin. To achieve this, a trio of serums is applied to your skin. These serums help to soothe the skin, as well as helping to maximise the results of the illuminiFacial.

The treatment is specially designed to provide you with 'optimum skin health'. Results can be visible on the skin instantly, however, to get the best out of this treatment, it is advised to have between three and six treatments, at four-to-six-week intervals.

The illuminiFacial would be beneficial to those whose skin is prone to congestion, discolouration, and visible signs of ageing. The treatment will overall improve the appearance, texture, and health of your skin. This is due to new collagen within the skin tissue, that will continue to develop after treatment.

Lead Nurse and Director of Studio Aesthete, Lucie Royer, founded the clinic in 2019. The clinic provide aesthetic services to their clients such as

injectables, laser, medi facials, and holistic therapies. Studio Aesthete's mission is to enhance clients rare, unmistakable beauty, while providing each client with an elevated aesthetic experience.

Lucie is incredibly passionate about the skin and the soul. The name of the clinic Studio Aesthete reflects the love of skincare and aesthetics within the staff and clients, as the definition of aesthete is 'a person who is appreciative of and sensitive to art and beauty'.

Lucie has travelled across the world and experienced different cultures, in order to understand different beauty therapies, and healing rituals. At Studio Aesthete, Lucie and her team go beyond delivering treatments for the skin, as they also focus on the cleansing and wellness of the soul.

Alongside Lucie, there are a range of qualified practitioners within the clinic. These are Hannah Dodds and Leanne Hume, who both hold the role of Nurse Injector and Prescriber. Sophia Elliott, who is a Skin and Laser Specialist. Amelia Cliff handles the administration side, as the clinic's receptionist.

[www.studioaesthete.co.uk](http://www.studioaesthete.co.uk)







# STRONG MARKET FOR BUY-TO-LET INVESTORS

By Bradley Hall's mortgage team

Property experts often note that the first few weeks of a new year set the tone for trends which will carry on throughout the year.

There has been a boom in buy-to-let mortgages, which have continued to steadily rise throughout February, reaching a record high of 2,235 mortgage products now available for first time landlords- compared to 1,311 mortgage deals available during 2021, according to BuyAssociation. Opportunities are opening up for first-time buy-to-let landlords, and with rents steadily increasing, as well as a range of new job opportunities and 'levelling up' across the region, now is the time to invest in buy-to-let property.

The housing market stayed buoyant throughout 2021 thanks to stamp-duty breaks. The same goes for the buy-to-let sector as a result of strong tenant demand throughout the last year. According to UK Finance, buy-to-let purchase activity increased to £18bn in 2021, with figures up by 83% on activity when compared to 2020; and in keeping with this, Shawbrook Bank found that the value of the private rental sector grew by 5.8% in 2021, to £1.4trn.

Shawbrook Bank also highlighted that the demand for tenants has been growing, with 42% of landlords reporting increased demand for their properties

in the last 12 months. With figures from established resources such as these indicating a healthy investment market, entering the buy-to-let property market as a first-time landlord is the perfect way to invest and see a good ROI.

The demand for rental space in city centres is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Since the pandemic began people have had more desire to plant roots away from city centres and to live with gardens and green spaces nearby. However, as the world begins to return to a 'new normal' and the country encourages the return to working in offices, we can expect an increasing number of tenants returning to cities, and in some cases moving to cities for the first time. This influx of occupational mobility and the moving of people to city centres will drive demand for house-in-multiple-occupation and multi-unit block residency, further increasing the demand for buy-to-let properties and the interest of current and potential first-time landlords.

As this demand continues and landlords are as keen as ever to either buy their first property or grow their current property portfolio, mortgages have been impacted too. Mortgage lenders are

competing on price, and increasingly, criteria to attract borrowers, and they are still tempting them with super cheap rates.

As the market remains strong and is further fuelled by low buy-to-let mortgage rates offered by lenders, securing a buy-to-let is now a brilliant way to invest, especially as the demand for mortgage applications continue to rise.

It is safe to say that the buy-to-let sector has encountered its fair share of disruption and change to regulations and requirements in recent years, so it is incredibly promising to see that mortgage lenders are eager and enthusiastic when it comes to attracting first-time landlords.

Owing to the results and statistics reported from experts it looks as though investing in bricks and mortar has become something that we will see a lot more of if the beginning of 2022 sets the trends. Your home or property may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.

For mortgage advice please contact **mortgages@bradleyhall.co.uk** or call 0191 260 2000.



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## THE PADDOCKS BLYTH, CAMBOIS

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A rare opportunity for the discerning buyer to acquire this stone barn conversion nestled within a quiet Northumberland coastal village, this outstanding property offers panoramic views across grassland and down the beach to the sea. This property will suit a variety of buyers and is ideal as a family home, holiday home or for use as holiday let subject to regulations.

Bradley Hall is delighted to offer for sale this fantastic four bedroom family home, the accommodation is spread over two floors and is presented to a high standard throughout.

From the welcoming entrance hall with stone tiled flooring doors lead to a generous dual aspect lounge with an inglenook fireplace, multi fuel burning stove and timber mantle, oak flooring, and ex-posed ceiling beams. Double glazed patio doors lead to the rear garden.

From the internal hallway with a cloakroom and WC, there is a conservatory overlooking and giving access to the rear garden. The dual aspect kitchen/dining room is well equipped with a good range of fitted units at base and wall levels along with a central isle breakfast bar with cupboards under,

contrasting work tops and upstands, a ceramic sink with mixer tap, four burner gas hob with extractor hood above, double oven and grill unit. Utility area leading to the garage. Exposed beams to the ceiling and 'Amtico' flooring complete the furnishings.

**Morpeth**  
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 **magna**homes

# Mulberry Lane





- Luxury new build development of two five bedroom detached stone houses and two detached stone four bedroom bungalows
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- 5 bed, 2 bath, 2 living
- Located in the quiet village of Longframlington in the heart of Northumberland offering easy access to the many attractions and villages along the beautiful Northumbrian coastline, the village has local shops, cafés, bars and restaurant. Further amenities can be found in the historic market towns of Morpeth and Alnwick, both with a variety of traditional shopping and national retailers also schooling for all ages.
- Transport needs are catered for by local buses and the A1 trunk gives vehicles access to the region both North and South. Morpeth also has a mainline rail station on the East Coast Line to Edinburgh and London.

To register your interested in this exclusive development contact Bradley Hall's Morpeth office via [morpeth@bradleyhall.co.uk](mailto:morpeth@bradleyhall.co.uk) or 01670 518 518





# Pinnacle Performance

By Adam Gray, Motoring Editor for Portfolio North

The latest Continental GT Speed is the most dynamic road car in Bentley's 102-year history and ultimate performance-focused interpretation of the world's benchmark luxury Grand Tourer.

Designed, engineered, developed and handcrafted in Bentley's carbon-neutral luxury automotive factory, the third-generation model builds on a long tradition of Speed variants.

Originally introduced with the highly-acclaimed, first-generation Continental GT Speed in 2007, itself inspired by the by the 3-litre Speed models of the 1920s, the latest GT Speed continues the bloodline by representing the ultimate combination of luxury and performance in a Grand Touring package.

The pinnacle performance Continental GT features advanced chassis technology harnessed specifically for the latest model.

New Electronic All-Wheel Steering enhances the dynamic nature of the Speed in BENTLEY and COMFORT driving modes. However, this is even more apparent in SPORT mode, as the steering combines with Bentley Dynamic Ride and an Electronic Limited Slip Differential for a level of agility unlike any other Bentley road car.

Featuring Active All-Wheel drive, the traction control and torque distribution has been recalibrated in all driver modes to provide a noticeable character shift relative to the standard Continental GT.

To complement the extra capability of the chassis, a newly-engineered Carbon Ceramic brake system has been

introduced as an option on the GT Speed. Carbon Silicon Carbide discs provide additional brake bite, with a strong, firm brake pedal feel and excellent brake fade resistance.

The GT Speed is the ultimate performance-focused expression of Bentley's definitive Grand Tourer, yet maintains the luxury, comfort and usability of its siblings. It is equipped with an updated version of Bentley's renowned 6.0-litre W12 TSI engine, delivering 659 PS (650 bhp) – a 4 per cent increase of 24 PS over the current W12 model – whilst maintaining an extraordinary 900 Nm (664 lb.ft) of torque. With exceptional handling, this results in a top speed of 208 mph and





0-60 mph in 3.5 seconds, a reduction of 0.1 second.

Both engine and transmission have been deliberately calibrated to suit the car's driver-focused credentials. This is most noticeable in SPORT mode, where the twin-turbocharged W12 has been tuned to keep the engine in the power band longer by up-shifting later, or downshifting earlier. This creates a more eager response to the driver's throttle inputs.

The dual-clutch, eight-speed transmission shift is twice as fast in SPORT mode as in the standard W12 model, in keeping with the Speed's ethos. This combines with a greater exhaust character during start-up and downshifts.

Not only does the Continental GT Speed offer impressive performance, to maximise efficiency the model benefits from Bentley's Stop-Start technology where the engine rests not only when the vehicle is stationary, but also at near-to-stop speeds.

Bentley's Variable Displacement system shuts down half of the engine's 12 cylinders under certain conditions with the transitions between the two being imperceptible to the driver. Intake and exhaust valves, fuel injection and ignition are all shut down on defined cylinders, with the engine running as a six-cylinder for improved fuel efficiency.

The muscular bodywork of the Continental GT has been amplified still

further on the GT Speed. Unique exterior detailing complements a powerful, athletic stance, blending seamlessly with the effortless elegance inherent to the Continental GT.

Speed models add a Dark Tint radiator grille and lower bumper grille, as well as unique, more sculpted sports sills, a Dark Tint radiator matrix and discreet Speed badging in chrome on the front fender.

Another signature feature of the most potent version of the Continental GT is unique, 22" Speed wheels in bright silver, with the option of a dark tint or black gloss finish. "Jewel" versions of the fuel and oil filler caps are standard, while illuminated Bentley treadplates to both sills are a nod to the Speed's performance credentials.

The cabin of the Continental GT Speed showcases Bentley's expertise in creating the world's finest automotive interiors. Handcrafted materials blend with unique trim and badging that are only available in the Speed and can be further personalised if desired.

The Continental GT Speed's credentials are further highlighted by a unique duotone colour split handcrafted in hide and matching Alcantara, which is also applied to the steering wheel. The exterior badging is matched with an elegant Speed icon on the passenger fascia.

The luxurious interior can be further personalised with a choice of 15 main

and 11 secondary hide colours, as well as the use of leather in lieu of Alcantara for the Speed colour split. The centre console can be finished in new dark tint engine turned aluminium, bringing a geometrically perfect machined surface and a beautifully patterned finish.

Bentley's Diamond in Diamond quilting is included as standard, and Speed embroidered headrests distinguish the cabin of the most potent Continental GT.

A range of veneers are available in GT Speed, starting with Piano Black veneer as standard. Customers can also choose Crown Cut Walnut, Dark Stained Burr Walnut and Dark Fiddleback Eucalyptus at no extra cost, with three open pore options (Dark Burr Walnut, Crown Cut Walnut and Koa) available as additional options.

As with all Continental GTs, the Speed offers four seats and exceptional Grand Touring luggage capacity of 358 litres. Packed with exquisite detail, a technologically advanced instrument panel and the acclaimed Bentley Rotating Display, the latest driver-focused model widens the Continental GT's performance credentials.

*The loan of the pictured vehicle was kindly arranged by JCT600's Bentley Newcastle dealership. Photography was provided by Graeme Rowatt Photography and captured at Pepper Arden Hall, a breath-taking country house wedding venue set in the heart of North Yorkshire.*





# Relaxation Stay-cation

The best spa hotels in the North

Whether you are looking for a weekend break, a wedding location, or just a day away from the office, these are the best spa hotels in the North you can visit, to fulfil your pamper needs.

## Rockliffe Hall

Darlington's Rockliffe Hall is a hugely popular five-star hotel with award-winning spa and fitness facilities. It is one of the largest spa hotels in the country, with a variety of on-site food options such as British classics at The Clubhouse and afternoon tea in the Old Hall. It also has an 18-hole championship golf course, and other outdoor activities such as falcon experiences, fishing, and Nordic walking within its 375 acres of grounds. Most exceptionally, it is home to restaurant The Orangery which has been awarded three AA Rosettes.



## Ramside Hall Hotel & Spa

Located on the outskirts of Durham, Ramside Hall Hotel & Spa, is one of the top spa hotels in the North. It has 127 bedrooms and suites within the hotel, and if you venture outside, you'll find 350 acres of luscious private grounds. As stated in the name, it is also home to a beautiful spa. But that is not all Ramside has to offer, as it also has a golf course and on-site restaurants such as Pemberton's Carvery, Rib Room Steakhouse and Fusion. Uniquely, it has gorgeous treehouse suites with excellent facilities, which can be used for stay-cations or to host weddings.



## Wynyard Hall

Throughout history Wynyard Hall played host to royals, aristocrats, politicians, diplomats, artists and writers. When Sir John Hall purchased Wynyard Hall in 1987, he was able to ensure Wynyard Hall remains one of the most renowned destinations in the North East, but now it can be enjoyed by all members of society. Wynyard Hall is also home to the plot-to-plate style restaurant, The Glass House, a luxury spa, and cottages to really switch off and fully enjoy your stay.



## Rudding Park

Rudding Park situated in the Victorian rural district – Harrogate is a privately owned hotel spa, that won Independent Hotel of the Year in 2019. It has 90 bedrooms and suites, an award-winning spa and two golf courses within its 300 acres. It has a selection of dining experiences and menus to choose from, including contemporary fine dining at the three AA Rosette Horto 'kitchen garden' restaurant. Interestingly, it also has a private cinema, which showcases popular movies to the guests.

## Grantley Hall

Another five-star luxury spa hotel located in Ripon, a small city within the Yorkshire Dales. Grantley Hall is a luxury hotel and wellness retreat with 47 bedrooms, formal gardens, a spa – Three Graces Spa and gym – Elite Gym. It also has a diverse range of sophisticated bars and restaurants, all of which use local seasonal produce and local suppliers. Michelin starred restaurant Shaun Rankin – named after, designed and created by the prestigious chef is at Grantley Hall too, and is the perfect fine dining experience to broaden your tastes.







## Performance 28 understand how important it is to maintain the performance of your car.

With a wealth of servicing and repair experience in the performance and prestige sector, your car is in good hands when you trust it to the Durham-based automotive specialists.

Although primarily known as a retailer of sports and prestige vehicles, Performance 28 have always supplied, serviced and owned a variety of performance cars from around the world. From American muscle cars to the finest European thoroughbreds, a dedicated and highly-skilled team of auto repair technicians

carefully maintain a huge variety of both new and classic vehicles, taking great pride in providing the very highest levels of service and care for your pride and joy.

Prestige cars of all shapes and sizes feel at home in the state-of-the-art showroom which is not only a clean, welcoming and professional workplace for the team, but boasts a full-equipped service department providing a range of services.





## SERVICING

All makes and models are serviced in line with manufacturer requirements, using genuine manufacturer parts and service kit, meaning you get all the benefits of main dealer service works, without the main dealer costs, and without main dealer wait times.

Manufacturer approved parts are used to ensure your warranty is maintained, whilst non-genuine approved parts can be used for those cars without a warranty.

As part of your routine service, the appropriate filters will be replaced, including oil filters, pollen filters, fuel filters and air filters, as specified within manufacturer recommended timescales.

Having your car's engine oil changed has many benefits, ranging from increased engine efficiency and better mileage to increasing engine longevity and being more eco-friendly, that is why – as part of service works – the team will drop all oil from the vehicle and replace with the correct quantities of new manufacturer recommended oils.

What's more, all servicing work is completed in line with your manufacturer servicing schedule and requirements, to ensure optimum care for your vehicle and to maintain its performance.

## MECHANICAL REPAIRS

The team undertake engine, drivetrain and other mechanical repairs on all makes and models of performance and prestige vehicles.

Drivetrains are inspected for damage and wear and tear to boots and joints, whilst the underside of your vehicle will be inspected to check the exhaust for damage and corrosion.

Brake discs and pads can also be replaced using genuine manufacturer parts, with your wheel hubs cleaned as part of brake disc replacement to ensure they are maintained to a clean level, which allows them to perform to their best.

## DIAGNOSTICS

Using the latest technology, the team can read your car's ECU fault memories and diagnose the cause of warning lights in the vehicle instrument cluster, enabling them to quote and undertake appropriate repairs.

As modern cars are controlled more by multiple electronic control units, it is essential Performance 28 has the latest diagnostic equipment to quickly reset and remove fault codes, reset control units, and reset engine management lights.

Such equipment includes a GYS Flash battery charger and support unit, which is used as a stable power source whilst diagnostics are taking place, and a Texa Axone Nemo 2 – a multi-brand diagnostic system that reads the car control unit to diagnose any faults.

## ENGINE CLEANING

One of only a handful of service centres accredited to undertake the process of car engine cleaning, Performance 28's EDT machines carry out a unique engineering process that delivers deep, full engine cleaning.

Your car is first prepared by draining the oil from the engine before a clean micron filter is added to the EDT machine, which pumps a bespoke mineral oil into the engine.

The machine will remove the build-up which contains carbon, varnish and other particles from your engine, with the container changing colour as everything is removed.

Once the engine has been drained, there is no contaminated residue, and a new filter is fitted and new oil added to your clean engine.

After the ultimate engine detox, car owners experience reduced emissions, better fuel economy and overall improved engine performance.



If you have any questions about how Performance 28 can help you look after your performance or prestige vehicle, get in touch with the team by calling 0191 389 7103 or emailing [info@performance28.com](mailto:info@performance28.com)



# A FOCUS ON WYNYARD

The North East's up-and-coming  
hub for prestige and enterprise



With a collection of prestigious residential developments, a thriving local community, and a significant increase in all areas of business and economic development in recent years, Tees Valley is a great place to live, work and plant roots.

In recent years Wynyard has become one of the most sought after addresses in the North of England, set within 885 acres of woodland, surrounded by parkland and close to a quaint village centre. With a range of some of the most luxury homes in the region, bespoke and unique self-build properties, gated and secure monitored areas and a homely village feel, it's no wonder that Wynyard is such a desirable area to live in the North East.

Just an hour from Newcastle International Airport, the area hosts a

collection of secure, luxurious residential developments including those by Robertson Homes and Vivre Executive Homes, both of which are marketed by Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents.

Both of these luxury new home developments offer residents a stunning, secure space to raise a family. The Robertson Homes Wynyard Estate development offers properties that range in size, with five or six bedrooms, three and four bathrooms, and a selection of living spaces varying from three or four per home. The Wynyard Estate also focuses on bringing the outdoors in. With large picture windows throughout each property, a signature garden room, as well as a large garden, this development is all about making the most of light and space.

Another exclusive development in Wynyard is Vivre Rise, by Vivre Executive Homes. This opulent development of nine spectacular mansions offers residents homes that have between six and seven bedrooms, some with a pool and gym area, three receptions rooms, and a triple garage.

As well as luxury properties, Wynyard offers its residents a range of indulgent eateries including The Stables and The Glass House at Wynyard Hall.

The Stables is a family business that has been in Wynyard since 2005. Having a chef as its owner means that the restaurant is passionate about the food



it serves, and this is certainly showcased throughout the extensive menu. The Stables use locally sourced produce and the highest quality ingredients are used for each individual dish. This venue's speciality is its famous cheesecake creations with a myriad of flavour fusions, including favourites Chocolate Orange and Milkybar with Oreo base, or Kinder Bueno with Hippo topper and Hobnob biscuit base.

Wynyard Hall's newest restaurant, The Glass House offers its guests a 'plot-to-plate' experience which focuses on estate-grown produce and local suppliers to deliver a totally unique and authentic experience. The Glass House presents its visitors with a botanical celebration of both design and flavour within a relaxed dining atmosphere with panoramic views over the kitchen garden at the iconic Wynyard Hall.

Wynyard Hall itself showcases generations of social and political influence through the Londonderry family and their circle of friends. Wynyard Hall played host to royals, aristocrats, politicians, diplomats, artists and writers. Sir John Hall purchased Wynyard Hall in 1987, maintaining the Hall as one of the most renowned properties in the North East. It was transformed into one of the most prestigious hotels and wedding and spa destinations in region.

The developments within the residential and hospitality sector have most certainly been thanks to the catalyst of significant economic growth within

the borough in recent years. Tees Valley has become a hub of redevelopment, investment and modernisation thanks to the vision and drive of Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayor, Ben Houchen. Mayor Houchen has led the improvements at Teesside Airport, has created a large number of jobs across the region, as well as supporting significant business wins including Hitachi and LNER.

The Hitachi contract win will future proof Tees Valley's transport links through the construction of the country's high speed 'bullet trains' in a move that will create and support 2,500 jobs. Other transport news recently saw the Tees Valley Mayor welcome LNER's first direct train from Middlesbrough to London, the station's first service in more than 30 years, further enhancing the transport links of the area.

Mayor Houchen has supported work to deliver the South Bank Quay, which recently reached a major milestone with mammoth steel piles being driven into the ground to strengthen the quay wall. The 1km quay itself, once completed, will support ambitions to make the site the UK's premier offshore wind hub and will be used by GE Renewable Energy. The projects have been supporting the Government's target to be a world leader for offshore wind by 2035 and the UK's plan to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Teesside International Airport has also expanded rapidly under Mayor Houchen's lead. Not only has the Airport

taken on flights from KLM, TUI, Ryanair, Loganair and many more, but it has also created a successful recruitment drive in recent months, including a firefighter recruitment drive at the start of 2022.

The Teesside Airshow is set to return this summer with plans to attract up to 25,000 people to the air show after it was grounded for the past five years. Due to take place in June 2022, the programme will include everything that was planned for 2020 and more, such as a series of fly-bys and aeroplanes, a classic car show, displays from the Army and a funfair, as well as live music and a range of stalls, including street food and hot drinks. The reintroduction of events such as these will not only showcase all the important upgrades that have taken place in the area, but also demonstrates the importance of culture in Tees Valley.

The positive residential, business, transport and additional industry changes that have been made under Mayor Houchen set Tees Valley on track for a confident future for residents and business tycoons alike.

In 2021 Bradley Hall opened its ninth office in Wynyard Business Park to be involved in this everchanging business area. Bradley Hall is an award-winning full-service property consultancy firm based in the North of England. With over 30 years of experience in the industry our firm has created a strong and professional reputation as one of the region's most trusted agencies for all commercial and residential property matters.



# Rowen Homes share their top interior trends for 2022

Rowen Homes is a North East based luxury online home store, curating and selling next level, glam interiors. Part of the Rowen Group, the business was founded during the pandemic in Aug 2020, by Alice & Andrew Hall.



Here they share their predictions for the hottest interior trends for 2022 and how you can create the look in your own home.

## LIMITLESS LUXE

As our core aesthetic at Rowen Homes, we are lovers of all things luxe. And it's a trend we are seeing to continually grow. Not just within main living spaces but infiltrating into all corners of the home. From laundry rooms to basements, kid's bedrooms and garages, in 2022, people will dial up the glam, adding an element of luxe to all their home's nooks and crannies. With the simplest of touches forgotten spaces can be turned into real conversation starters!

Achieve limitless luxe with simple accessories:



*Pharaoh Gold Finish Clear Perspex Jars: Large £12, Medium £9.90, Small £9*



*Murelles White Marble & Gold Bathroom Set: £78*

## CURVE APPEAL

Curve's definitely the word for 2022! Gone away are the angular lines of furnishings, replaced with a new smooth groove. We are seeing customers invest in home décor like curved couches, curved bar designs and even curved kitchen islands!

Furniture with added curve appeal;



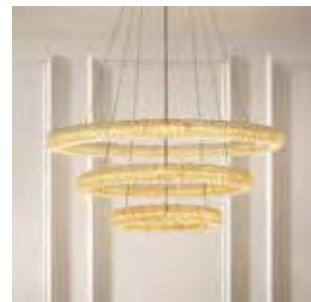
*Souffle Whitewash Bouclé Occasional Chair - £349*



*Belvoir Cream Luxury Curved Velvet Bed - £1,149 (King)*

## STATEMENT LIGHTING

Glow up your home and set the tone with gorgeous statement lighting. Often an afterthought when planning interiors, many are now designing collections around key lighting pieces – something we will continue to see as a trend going forward. Large dramatic pendant lights and chandeliers, statement wall lamps and intriguing table and floor lamps are all part of this trend. Good lighting should be changeable to set the mood and create the perfect ambience. Whether that be a work light, relaxing light or lighting to highlight various features such as artwork, ceiling corning and decorative features.



*Mae Premium 3 Ring Pendant Ceiling Light - £119*



*Oralie Matte Brass Wall Light with Mink Shade - £110*

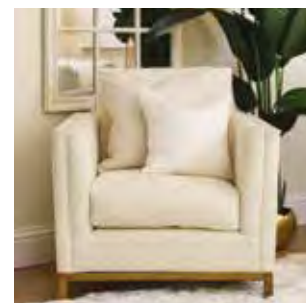
For more inspiration and to browse the full Rowen Homes collection, visit [www.rowenhomes.com](http://www.rowenhomes.com), Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and Pinterest @rowenhomes or say hello on 0191 743 0219.



*Coco Large Ivory Bouclé Luxury Sofa Bed - £1,969.00*

## BEAUTIFUL BOUCLÉ

Textured bouclé continues to offer unrivalled comfort and style to any room. Inspired by high-end fashion, thanks to Chanel's iconic designs, is also continuing to make an impact on the interiors world too. And believe us, it's an insanely beautiful match that has us wanting everything for our home in textures that bouclé brings.



*Coco Ivory Bouclé Luxury Armchair - £979.00*

## PEARLCORE

In 2022, the world is most certainly your oyster as we see people of all ages embracing iridescent accents in their homes. From interiors and clothing to even pearl themed parties are growing in popularity. Adding a touch of luxe, pearlcure instantly elevates your interior space giving edge, texture and a gorgeous iridescent glow. Achieve the look with pearl floor tiles, sateen- finished pearl toned wall paint, bedding or simple accessories.



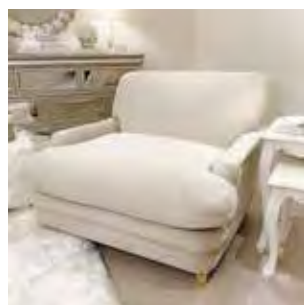
*Hailes Pearl Satin Marble Effect Cushion - 50 x 50cm - £42.00*



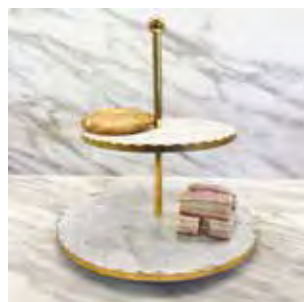
*Agata Ivory & Pearl Wallpaper - £39 p/roll*

## BATTER UP

The trend for cake baking will continue to rise, (quite literally) in 2022. And is set to infiltrate the interiors market too, bringing into our homes the most sumptuous shades and textures, that are simply good enough to eat. Think coffees, creams and toffee shades. Busy bakers will also see demand grow for stylish kitchenware and accessories.



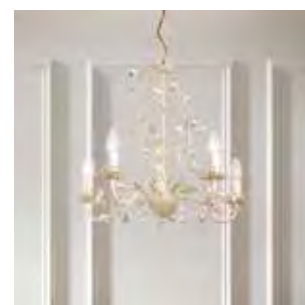
*Marshmallow Beige Velvet Squashy Chair - £569.00*



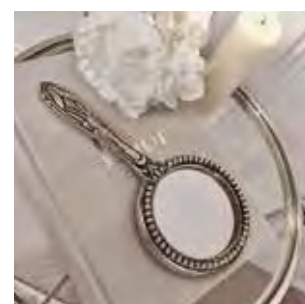
*Borel Gold Foil Marble 2 Tier Cake Stand - £74*

## A RETURN TO TRADITION

In 2022, we are also seeing traditional details making a big comeback. With so much change around the world over the past few years, it's no surprise that more and more people are craving a sense of timelessness, comfort and even a bit of nostalgia in their homes. From pattern mixing and the incorporation of antique looking pieces, this year is about honouring our roots. And our Bridgerton inspired Regency product selection captures this to a tee, or should that be tea?



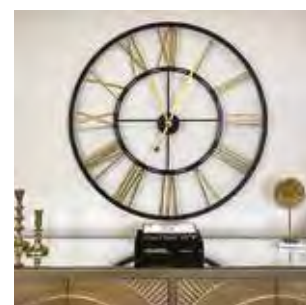
*Melody 5 Bulb Ceiling Pendant Light - £189.00*



*Cartmel Antique Silver Mirror - £26.00*

## HOT HOROLOGY

The original tick tock! A sign of the times, we are seeing a real growing interest in clocks and watches than ever before. In particular for oversized wall clocks as décor in the home.



*Tamra XL Black & Gold Wall Clock - £144*



*Bosie Champagne Large Wall Clock - £119*



At Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents we have enjoyed a period of significant success for our clients. Properties are selling quickly and often achieving higher than asking price. Demand is currently outweighing supply, and we need more stock for keen buyers across the North.

Our team of experts offer an unrivalled service and prioritise our clients' requirements – resulting in achieving an efficient sales process. Take a look at some of the properties which we recently sold.







Chevallier Court, £925,000



Field House Close, Hepscott, £895,000



Cottingvale, Morpeth, £650,000



Glenander, Bamburgh, £700,000





# RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MARKET ENJOYS JUMP START TO THE YEAR

January and February saw the highest growth in property prices in 20 years.





There's no denying that the residential property market has proven to be unpredictable over the course of the pandemic. The Stamp Duty Holiday encouraged many to move ahead of planned in order to save up to £15,000 – ultimately bringing a number of planned sales forward into the period spanning July 2020 to September 2021. This, amongst other factors has led to a lack of supply in a market already seeing higher levels of demand.

Despite this, the average price for a home grew by nearly 1% to £255,556 in January, in the best start to the year since 2005. Transactions have been the highest since 2007 and have grown by 25% since pre-pandemic levels of 2019. A factor in this growth in activity is the low mortgage rates and the savings collected by many who have been unable to travel or spend on socialising due to restrictions.

The Telegraph reported at the end of February that house prices have jumped almost £8,000 in the last month, the fastest growth for 20 years – with the average price of a house costing £348,804 – 9.5 per cent higher than this

time last year. This has resulted in an overall increase in the average house price of almost £40,000 in the two years since the pandemic began. To put that into perspective, in the two years preceding the pandemic house prices rose £9,000.

Across our branch network which spans the North East market, we have noticed homes selling exceptionally quickly, and often higher than asking price. It's certainly a sellers market due to heightened demand and lack of supply. We believe that this demand will remain strong and while prices may continue to grow, it is anticipated that the year the housing market may even out.

We are also welcoming more buyers from outside of the region, and many movers are now ready to retreat to the countryside due to flexible working conditions, or for similar reasons require more space for a home office.

It is likely that buying a home will become even more expensive and a challenge for many as wage growth stagnates and interest rates rise. Many analysts expect that policymakers

will increase the Bank Rate this year, after it pushed up to 0.25pc at the end of last year.

Robert Gardner, of Nationwide, warned this growth could slow as affordability stretched to new extremes when he recently spoke to The Telegraph. "House price growth has outstripped earnings growth by a wide margin since the pandemic struck," he continued "Similarly, a typical mortgage payment as a share of take-home pay is now above the long run average, despite mortgage rates remaining close to all-time lows."

We have teamed up with national part-buy part-rent specialists to help support buyers find their dream home and to allow sellers to open up their home to a much wider pool of potential buyers. The scheme, which is exclusive in the North East to Bradley Hall, is set to launch in the spring.

To speak to a property expert about selling your home please visit [www.bradleyhall.co.uk](http://www.bradleyhall.co.uk) to find your nearest branch.



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# The Inn Collection Group bought by Harris family and Kings Park Capital

## Gold-standard in modern pub groups' has new owner

Leading pubs with rooms operator The Inn Collection Group has been acquired by a new company backed by The Harris Family Trusts together with Kings Park Capital.

The deal will see the 31-site pubco continue 'trading as normal' with its existing teams, as it continues to roll out strategic 'buy and build' growth plans to expand its pubs with rooms model across the north of England and North Wales.

Bradley Hall acted on behalf of The Inn Collection Group- with group managing director Neil Hart acquiring 12 sites for the firm.

Managing director of The Inn Collection Group Sean Donkin said: "This is a hugely exciting new chapter for our entire team.

"Our success really stems from loving what we do- which is operating outstanding sites where our customers can eat, drink, sleep and explore from in exceptional locations- with a cracking team of people at all levels. "I am absolutely delighted that The Harris

Family Trusts believe in our product and performance and are investing in our future at such a dynamic time.

"We look forward to a long relationship with the Harris family and resuming our established association with Kings Park Capital, who were part of The Inn Collection Group's formation in 2013.

"It's very much a case of 'business as usual' across our operations as we continue to invest in our people and estate to further develop The Inn Collection Group brand and concept while growing our portfolio with new sites.

"Our greatest thanks to the team at Alchemy for backing us over the past four years and enabling us to far exceed our projected growth plans."

The Harris family have many years of experience successfully investing and growing leisure and hospitality businesses having been one of the founding families of The Bourne Leisure Group which it held for over 45 years before selling a majority stake in 2021.

Paul Harris said: "We are excited at the prospect of backing Sean and his team to continue their ambitious strategy and to support further growth of their high quality portfolio of well-located inns with great potential.

Commenting on the transaction, Alchemy Partner Thomas Boszko said: "Our investment into The Inn Collection Group is a text book example of the kind of deal we target: backing an outstanding management team to aggregate and dramatically enhance multiple underinvested owner-operated sites. Sean and the team have built the gold standard in modern inn groups and I have no doubt the new owners will be as delighted with the performance and the team as we have been."

To speak to an expert at Bradley Hall regarding its commercial property acquisitions and sales services, please call 0191 232 8080.



# COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MARKET RECOVERY CONTINUES IN LEEDS

By David Cran, Director - Yorkshire,  
Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents

For the last decade, Leeds has become one of the UK's trailblazing cities for enterprise, culture, and development attracting significant businesses to the area as well as huge investment and demand for commercial space across a number of sectors.

The most recent statistics published, based on data collected from Q1-Q3 2021, showcased that take up totalled almost half-a-million sq ft, unsurprisingly surpassing take up from Q1-Q3 2020 by 93%. It is also expected that total take up is 10% less than the five year average for Q3, however recent major project announcements show a positive sentiment and suggest that the recovery is set to continue to pre-covid performance and beyond.

The joint venture formed to bring forward the £280 million development of Leeds' Whitehall Riverside recently took a step forward, moving closer to the launch of a project which is set to substantially alter the city's built environment. City-based property investor and car parking operator, Town Centre Securities Plc, has joined with Glenbrook to create a new masterplan which is being proposed - providing a mixed-use scheme in a strategic location just three minutes' walk from Leeds train station.

Design and build contractors, McAleer & Rushe have also begun construction of £47m City Square House, next to Leeds Station, in May 2021 and the first construction milestone has now been achieved with the erection of its first tower crane. The landmark building will start to emerge as the steel superstructure rises from the ground. Completion is planned for summer 2023 and the opening will coincide with the completion of the public realm improvements at City Square.

In other news for Leeds city centre, The 35,846 sq ft Lumina building is the

second Grade A office to be developed by Scarborough Group International (SGI) as part of phase two development at Thorpe Park Leeds. Coverings Ltd, which owns distribution and retail businesses within the tile and flooring industry, has secured the entire 10,600 sq ft first floor at Lumina on a ten-year lease. The business is relocating its team of 100 people from its existing premises at Project House in Armley, Leeds. Specialist commercial interior design company, Design Tonic has recently completed the fit-out of the space.

The growth of the education, tech and life science sectors have made a considerable impact on the commercial property market, however a lack of affordable, interesting and collaborative space which draw in innovative organisations and talent are limited. Supply is generally an issue - currently sitting 25% below the five-year average level - with Grade A space in undersupply. Throughout Q1-Q3 of 2021 Grade A space accounted for 45% of take up. Whilst hybrid working is here to stay, the pandemic also highlighted the importance of collaborative working within a productive and nurturing work environment - and we can expect the requirement for such space to continue to grow.

While retail market remains challenging due to changes in consumer habits, rising rents and the success of e-commerce - a range of temporary occupier initiatives known as 'meanwhile' projects have developed throughout the city. The concept has been designed to fill empty space whilst offering flexible opportunities for up-and-coming local businesses.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority is facilitating collaboration across local authorities to stimulate and share best practice on 'meanwhile' uses. Its

dedicated website to such space states that; "Over the last decade, Leeds has supported numerous independently-led 'meanwhile' use projects, with notable successes achieved in partnership with East Street Arts. In the wake of recent changes to the way people are using space and accessing retail, Leeds is now working with partners to activate vacant shop units across the city centre. As the city prepares the way for Leeds 2023, it is also exploring how 'meanwhile' activity can help to seed new projects that will play a key role in this landmark year of culture."

Leeds' 2023 bid to become the European Capital of Culture will certainly ramp up activity, mainly in the creative sector - with its main aim being a strong economic recovery for the city following the pandemic. Cllr James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council, said: "It's inspiring to see so many partners united in their shared belief in culture and the integral role LEEDS 2023 will play in making Leeds such a unique place to live, work and visit in the coming year.

"Culture is the heartbeat of Leeds, enriching the lives, health and wellbeing of people living in our communities and enhancing the city as a whole. It has also been a catalyst for some of the most exciting developments and investments the city has seen in recent years, including the arrival of Channel 4, the UK Infrastructure Bank and the vision British Library has for its future presence in the north.

"LEEDS 2023 will be both a celebration of everything we've achieved together as a city as well as a massive statement of intent about our ambition for Leeds to be an international standard-bearer for the nurture and support of creative talent, innovation and culture-led inclusive growth."







# AMAZON CONFIRMS IT WILL OPEN HUGE SITE IN WYNYARD NEAR STOCKTON

Amazon announces plans to open a fourth warehouse in the North East, creating thousands of jobs.

The online retailer has confirmed it is behind the enormous development that is underway off the A19 in Wynyard, near Stockton.

Work to build the site has been underway with contractors working tirelessly to erect the building at the Wynyard Business Park.

Amazon has refused to confirm or deny that it is opening another "Fulfilment Centre" in the region. However, it has been recently confirmed that it will be opening a site on Teesside and that work is now underway.

It said: "We are excited about our latest project in Teesside.

"We are in the very early stages of our development and look forward to sharing more information as the project progresses." The development has been assigned the codename 'NCL2,' which follows on from the name given to its

latest site, NCL1 in Gateshead. Plans obtained by appeared to confirm work was underway for the retailer on a project titled "Amazon NCL2-Stockton."

Meanwhile, first pictures appear to suggest the building will be roughly the same size as Amazon's larger Fulfilment Centres in Durham and Gateshead. As planning permission was first approved in May 2021, it was understood that the site would create more than 1,200 permanent roles. Amazon has not yet confirmed the number of jobs at the Teesside site, but it is now believed up to 1,300 permanent and a further 1,000 seasonal roles could be created.

Once the site opens, almost 5,000 jobs and a further 4,000 seasonal roles will have been created across its Fulfilment Centres in Durham, Darlington, Gateshead and Stockton in the space of just 20 months.

This is in addition to the hundreds already employed at its smaller logistics sites around the region at locations including Washington and Jarrow. As the retailer opened its newest site at Follingsby Max in Gateshead in September, the promise of more jobs was described as an "endorsement of the region's status as a great place in which to do business."

Jonathan Walker, who was director of policy at the North East Chamber of Commerce at the time, said: "This announcement is a further endorsement of the region's status as a great place in which to do business and builds on the strong commitment Amazon has already made to the North East.

"After such a difficult economic period we're really pleased to see jobs being created that will provide opportunities to people in Gateshead and beyond."

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# SAGE REVEALED AS NAMING PARTNER FOR ASM GLOBAL'S NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD QUAYS DEVELOPMENT WITH £10M INVESTMENT

ASM Global, the world's leading venue management and services company, has announced that Sage, the leader in accounting, financial, HR and payroll technology for small and mid-sized businesses, is the naming partner for the transformational NewcastleGateshead Quays arena and conference centre development. Opening in 2024, The Sage will be a 54,500 sqm pioneering community-focused, state-of-the-art business and entertainment destination, bringing the world to the North East. The venue will support the region's businesses by unlocking access to new customers and international markets through commercial and promotional opportunities.

It will be the North East's largest business and entertainment district and will welcome more than one million visitors annually. The development will provide an estimated £70m annual boost for the local economy, creating 2,000 jobs, the majority of which will be sustained over the long-term. The Sage will sit between the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and the renowned international music centre, Sage Gateshead. The Sage will be a pioneering community-focused international venue through:

- The supply chain- Giving priority to local suppliers and contractors so that The Sage is built by the North East, for the North East.
- Recruitment and upskilling- by partnering with local education institutions, the development will promote and inspire the next generation of young professionals and entrepreneurs by offering work experience opportunities that lead to sustainable employment.

- Access for all- The Sage will support local businesses with workspace options and opportunities to showcase their products and services to a global audience. The Sage 'green access' pass will ensure members of the local community who wouldn't usually be able to, have a chance to attend events.

Founded in a pub in Newcastle 40 years ago by graduates from Newcastle University, Sage has grown to become one of the UK's biggest tech companies, with operations and customers around the world. These customers benefit from being part of a network that connects them with expert advice and guidance, and the company plans for The Sage to play a pivotal role in connecting the local business community. Sage Group most recently confirmed its commitment to the North East by opening a new £20m global headquarters at the Cobalt Business Park in North Tyneside. The new HQ was the single biggest office refit seen in the region, in which Sage employed contractors from 25 small and medium businesses, many of which were local.

Steve Hare, CEO, Sage Group, said: "Sage's heart has always been in the North East, and today's announcement embodies our purpose – to knock down barriers so everyone can thrive. The Sage brings the world to the North East's front door, providing a platform to celebrate the region's brilliance.

"We are committed to making sure that The Sage is an inclusive venue by giving access to all, no matter their background. We believe it will unlock the huge potential the North East has, attracting greater investment and innovation."

Tom Lynch, Senior Vice President, Europe for ASM Global, said: "This ambitious

and transformational development will create a genuinely unique events campus with an iconic waterfront location, so it is fantastic to be teaming up with an equally iconic North East brand in the form of Sage.

"ASM Global has enjoyed over 25 years of success in the North East and we look forward to joining forces with Sage to take live entertainment, conventions and exhibitions to new heights, and cement the region's reputation as a sought-after business, leisure and cultural destination."

Paul Samuels, Executive Vice President at AEG Global Partnerships, said: "For this new entertainment and business district in the North East, we had a vision to welcome a partner that not only has a strong affiliation with the region, but one that shares our values in sustainability and commitment to the local community.

"The Sage has a vision that will provide new opportunities to their customers and also support businesses in the region so we are really proud to be working together with Sage on such an exciting development. As AEG Global Partnerships we ensure we target the right brands for the right opportunities and we couldn't have a more perfect fit with Sage."

The Sage operator, ASM Global, has a UK portfolio which includes the Utilita Arena, Newcastle, the AO Arena in Manchester, the first direct arena in Leeds and The SSE Arena, Wembley. Throughout the construction phase and beyond, Sage will work closely with NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI) to engage and collaborate with strategic partners and stakeholders to ensure this investment builds on the region's strengths and global reputation as a place to visit, invest and host major world-class events.





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## Newcastle based operator, Vaulkhard Leisure coinvests £350,000 into Ponteland bar

Newcastle based leisure operator, Vaulkhard Leisure, took on a lease for The Diamond pub in Ponteland, bringing its estate to 20 pubs, bars and cafes.



The group is coinvesting £350,000 with Star Pubs & Bars to modernise the pub, which has 12 ensuite wi-fi fitted letting rooms and a function room. The operator has been running The Diamond on a temporary agreement since the end of 2018.

The Diamond is Vaulkhard Leisure's third lease with Star Pubs & Bars. Their others being Swarley's in the Groat Market in Newcastle and Staith House on the Fish Quay in North Shields. The move is a demonstration of Vaulkhard Leisure's confidence in the hospitality sector in the North East.

Director Ollie Vaulkhard says: "Whilst Covid has been a challenge for all it has also presented lots of opportunities, which we'll continue to take. We have moved away from late night venues to those with broader appeal and will continue to invest and grow in the region. Unlike other parts of the country, we saw strong performance in Newcastle city centre from April 2021 especially mid-week. I think it is because we don't have the same proportion of commuters.

"The city didn't lose its workforce. It was still a nice place to socialise. Even though some people did work from home, they continued to come into the city for leisure. I have enjoyed watching our sites build trade and see customer and staff happy once again."

Known for its fantastic riverside location, The Diamond refurbishment will create a comfortable usable alfresco socialising space that can be enjoyed for the majority of the year. Funds are being spent on a six-by-six metre covered timber pergola adorned with foliage and vintage lighting. The heated decked area will feature two trees within the canopy, a gas firepit, metal privacy screens and rustic wooden

tables and benches covered in sheep fleeces.

The exterior of the pub is also to be repainted in a muted beige with new striking gold and black signage. Inside, the décor and furniture will be upgraded offering better-quality leather and fabric low- and high-level seating. The walls will be a mix of painted and rustic timber panelling and the bar will be clad in a metal decorative tile and surrounded by ceramic tiles.

Says Jeremy Scott, Investment Manager, Star Pubs & Bars: "We're delighted that Vaulkhard Leisure has taken on the lease of The Diamond. They have years of experience and a great reputation for running quality pubs, bars and cafes in the North East.

"The upgrade will improve the comfort for customers and bring the pub up to date. By the time The Diamond reopens hopefully the airport will be operating to capacity, making it an ideal location for a stopover as well as great place to socialise for the many local customers who use it on a regular basis."





# SHOWSTOPPER FOR SUNDERLAND

## **Riverside Sunderland**

Plans unveiled for  
£80m new leisure  
development in  
heart of city





SUNDERLAND city centre is set for a showstopping addition, with early plans for a large-scale arena and events space revealed for Riverside Sunderland.

Sunderland City Council has set out a game-changing vision for the site of the former Crowtree Leisure Centre, with plans for a massive leisure investment anchored by a new 10,000-capacity, multi-purpose arena, that will bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to the city every year. As well as this large indoor arena, the multi-use leisure development will feature a food hall, restaurants, a hotel and studios, together forming a unique destination that will have something for everyone.

The council is working with a range of partners to deliver the project, including a UK based industry-leading operator to shape the plans. The project has already attracted over £20m in funding from Sunderland City Council and national Government and will move into advanced design stages if Sunderland’s Cabinet sign off the proposed budget for the scheme.

The new development – which will deliver a huge boost to businesses in the heart of the city – will be a vibrant visitor attraction by day and night. Together with transformational projects that are underway and planned for the former Vaux Brewery site and Sheepfolds, the arena plans mark an ambitious new phase

in Sunderland’s city centre evolution, which council bosses say is about creating an experience-led destination.

Councillor Graeme Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, said:

*“The rate of transformation in our city points to the level of regeneration we are delivering for Sunderland, and this development raises that bar higher”.*

*“We set out an ambition to bring more experiences to the city as part of our Riverside Sunderland investment strategy, and you only have to look at the change to date in the city centre to see that it is more than an aspiration – it’s something we’re determined to make a reality”.*



**" The rate of transformation in our city points to the level of regeneration we are delivering for Sunderland, and this development raises that bar higher".**

Councillor Graeme Miller  
Leader of Sunderland City Council



*"We're transforming Sunderland – we're delivering on our promises to residents – and we're proud to be spearheading a programme of change in Sunderland that is unlike any period of change in living memory. This new investment will be an incredible addition to the city centre."*

The scheme will create a much richer mix of attractions and activities in the city centre, with an emphasis on complementing and supporting the existing successful cultural attractions in the city, such as the Empire Theatre, the new Auditorium and the investments in Keel Square including the planned Culture House and the Keel Square Holiday Inn.

The arena forms part of the council's successful bid to the UK Government's Future High Street Fund, which is earmarked to enable the demolition of the remains of the former leisure centre and to undertake associated works to accelerate the plans. The development will be subject to a long-term lease agreement with a leisure operator, the income from which will recoup the council's initial investment.

To stay up to date with the latest Riverside Sunderland developments, visit [www.riversidesunderland.com](http://www.riversidesunderland.com)

## City organisations react to the plans

Sharon Appleby, chief executive of Sunderland BID, said:

*"The most aspirational and successful city centres are those that are able to attract visitors and residents, with a blended offer of retail, food and drink and experience-led leisure."*

*"Today's announcement is a significant one, creating a new leisure destination that will attract yet more businesses who want to be part of the city's journey and who can take advantage of the huge investment and transformation underway in the heart of Sunderland. This is good news for our existing traders, delivering a facility that will complement the existing offer in Sunderland, and grow Sunderland's reputation as an ambitious city with world class facilities and attractions. And it's great news for residents, who can look forward to the next exciting stage of the city's evolution."*

Sir David Bell, vice chancellor and chief executive of the University of Sunderland, said: "I have always said that a strong university needs a strong city and today's announcement further strengthens Sunderland's ambition to be a great place to live, work and study."

*"We look forward to working with the City Council and other partners as this exciting plan comes to fruition."*

Ellen Thinnesen, chief executive of Education Partnership North East and chair of Sunderland Business Partnership, said:

*"This is a huge announcement, that will enhance Sunderland's reputation as a dynamic city and a fantastic place to live, work, study and play."*

*"There is a palpable sense of excitement and ambition in Sunderland right now, and a real momentum-build with positive announcement after positive announcement. What an brilliant time for the city and a bright future ahead."*

Natasha McDonough, chair of the Sunderland Area at the North East England Chamber of Commerce and managing director of Sunderland-based MMC Research & Marketing, said:

*"Developments like this create jobs and opportunities for local people and businesses, as well as boosting trade for the companies already on the doorstep, so it's a hugely positive step forward for the city to attract investment on this scale. The transformation we are seeing in Sunderland city centre is rapid, and the arrival of experience-based leisure will complement the new commercial and residential developments that are progressing right now, helping keep people in the city, spending their money and boosting the economy."*



# HEADING INTO 2022 ON A HIGH

Karpet Mills looking to continue strong growth into the New Year as home improvement market continues to thrive.

Heading into 2022 on a high – Karpet Mills looking to continue strong growth into the New Year as home improvement market continues to thrive.

Karpet Mills, the North East leading Carpet and Flooring retailer, are planning ahead for what is expected to be a busy start to 2022, as carpet and flooring sales continuing to prosper due to the boost in home improvement sector, post lockdown.

All six Karpet Mills store, plus the NEW Designer Flooring Premium Showroom at their Kingston Park branch in Newcastle, successfully re-opened and business has been extremely positive, with footfall numbers incredibly high.

“With life slowly returning to normal after lockdown, we were unsure of how the market would react.” Says Joel Dickinson, Karpet Mills Director. “But we are delighted to say that the home improvement sector, and importantly for us- carpets and flooring, has seen an enormous spike in demand, and has remained consistently high for the second half of 2021.”

Due to the high demand, the team has expanded, with new experienced sales staff to assist in stores, and also significantly increasing their team of fitting experts. “With the investment of our



Designer Flooring showrooms, we have seen an increased interest in bespoke, detailed flooring projects, and we have had to invest further in our team to ensure we can successfully undertake these developments. We are excited to start 2022 and continue to grow the business.”

With stores in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Hexham, and Benton, the 6th generation family run business is able to offer even more quality carpet and flooring deals. “We offer consistently high-quality products at consistently low prices. Established growth of our business has significantly boosted our buying power. We source ‘A-Grade’ stock from across Europe and buy in bulk to pass the savings directly to our customers – and with the new warehouse space at Kingston Park and Hexham, we can now hold even more stock.” Adds Joel, “We are able to sell famous branded products at prices not normally seen by the general public. We sell Axminsters, heavy weight 80/20 wool twists and stainfree saxonies to our customers at better than wholesale cost. And with the addition of our Designer Flooring showrooms, we are now able to provide the best names in hard flooring too – including the largest Amtico display in the North East.”

Karpet Mills combines the experience gleaned from over a 140 years trading with the modern-day expectations of quality and service to provide the full package for every customer. All branches, including Designer Flooring showrooms are open for trade 7 days a week.





**agilico**  
Workplace Technology  
Reception

# A NEW NAME FOR A TRUSTED FACE

Mark Bryce, Sales Director, Agilico

When local workplace technology provider United Carlton opened its doors back in 1987, the internet hadn't yet been invented and the first version of Microsoft Excel had only recently been released.



Meanwhile, hardware such as photocopiers were slow and cumbersome, and that's all they could do too – photocopy. The thought of collaborative, document management systems and integrated multifunctional devices was fanciful.

Fast forward 35 years, and the rise of cloud-based software and ever smarter document hardware has seen workplace technology develop previously unimaginable power and capability, which in turn has seen working practices and environments transform immeasurably.

It's clear then that times have continuously changed in the world of workplace technology. And after a turbulent couple of years for many organisations, even bigger changes have recently taken place for the business formerly known as United Carlton. In 2021, the business was renamed Agilico.

Agilico is a name that reflects its customers' mission to make work easy for their teams by deploying cutting-edge workplace technology. It is the result of a combined group of UK technology businesses backed by Horizon Capital, including United Carlton and Gateshead based Diamond Group, each with the same customer-first philosophy, local knowledge and relationships. Building on its vast expertise in workplace technologies, Agilico's most recent member is document management software provider INVU, further deepening its expertise in delivering and developing software solutions.

For those familiar with the staff at United Carlton, not much has changed. The same friendly faces are still present, and they're still supporting local businesses large and small in the region. What Agilico now has is a much greater capability and service offering for local businesses to take advantage of. The change has also meant the business itself has been expanding its workforce in the North East and operates from 13 sites UK-wide, providing a truly national reach and service capability.

Not only is Agilico now the largest independent workplace technology provider in the UK, it is also the only independent North East business within this sector to be awarded places on Public Sector frameworks. In doing so, it sits alongside some of the biggest manufacturers in the world, cementing its pedigree as the number one local provider for the education sector in the region, while also supporting organisations such as Durham Constabulary and the NHS. Agilico also supplies over 30% of the North East's top 200 firms and is a trusted partner to the likes of Greggs, Sage and SCS, which is testimony to its service, ability and innovation.

Following a tough time for hardware sales and the business service sector in general, Agilico has bucked the trend with some recent large contract awards from Northern Education Trust and Parkdean



Resorts, for over 500 multifunctional devices. Huge strides in technology usage over the last decade have revolutionised the way businesses work, and rapid and continuous change has become the defining characteristic of our time. Agilico has been able to provide real value in this area and the business has consequently seen a record period in printer sales, as companies look for trusted workplace technology specialists to partner with.

Now with people working from both their office and their homes, the buzzword in the office space at the moment is "Agile working". Agilico has seen its customers look for innovative solutions to assist them with ways in which they can manage their documents and communicate more efficiently, wherever they are.

So, while continuing to provide market leading managed print services to local businesses, which includes innovative carbon-neutral devices, it has also invested heavily in its telecoms and software divisions. It now delivers a wide range of complementary agile working solutions, referred to as its "Agile Toolkit". These solutions have proved especially popular with customers as they look to combat issues arising from more flexible, hybrid working practices.

Key solutions include automated invoice processing (through its own INVU Verify software), cloud telephony platforms (through its Agilico Connect system), secure document retrieval solutions, hybrid mail systems for managing outbound mail, digital mailrooms for inbound mail management, and much more.

Many of these tools can integrate directly with existing technology systems to deliver a truly agile working environment, allowing teams to stay connected, responsive and productive no matter where they are. For more information on these agile working solutions, visit [www.agilico.co.uk](http://www.agilico.co.uk).

"This is an incredibly exciting time for us as a business. Ever since we originally founded United Carlton, both Warren Colby and I have been fully invested in the business and we remain so today. Our mission has always been to keep the customer at the forefront of everything we do, while ensuring we offer clients cutting edge workplace technology. We've thrived on building strong local relationships and we're proud of the many trusted partnerships we've forged with organisations of all sizes from our offices in the North East, Yorkshire and the North West. Since receiving investment back in 2019 we have continued to grow and diversify, with our new name and enhanced capabilities reflecting this. We're now able to deliver our services with quality and consistency throughout the UK, while continuing to build and value our strong local relationships. Technology in the workplace has evolved rapidly and we all need to make changes. Our working environments have become more Agile and secure information management has become more important than ever – and this is presenting fantastic opportunities for businesses to make real, lasting improvements to their workplaces and workflows."



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# NEW APPOINTMENTS BY PROPERTY FIRM TO SUPPORT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents is celebrating further business expansion with strategic appointments to bolster growth throughout its property management department and wider business.



*Harriet Hoyland, business administration apprentice, Catherine Affleck, group operations director and head of property management, and Andrew Cole, property management surveyor of Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents.*

The property firm has appointed experienced property management surveyor, Andrew Cole, and business administration apprentice, Harriet Hoyland.

Catherine Affleck, group operations director and head of property management at Bradley Hall said; "I am thrilled we have been able to expand the team with two new members of staff, each of whom bring their own skills and knowledge of procedure.

"Investing in new talent at apprentice level brings a fresh perspective, as well as giving us an opportunity to nurture our team as they mature.

"We are also delighted to be able to welcome Andy who brings a wealth of experience to our, already established, team and will allow us to maintain our service delivery at the high level we have become known for, while also attracting new clients and instructions.

"Our property management department are also hiring for two new

positions presently. We are looking for a property management surveyor and a property inspector, both of whom will be based in our head office in Newcastle. If you are interested in either of these positions, please apply via our website."

Andy joins the firm with 38 years of management experience and a broad range of knowledge to assist with Bradley Hall's growing property management portfolio. He has been involved in the management of various commercial property portfolios with a mix of freehold and leasehold premises, which involving daily contact with landlords and tenants.

Harriet joins Bradley Hall on a business administration apprenticeship and will gain her Level 3 Housing and Property qualifications, delivered by Learning Curve, while at the firm. Through this qualification Harriet will learn about organisation policies and procedures, legislation and regulation, customer service, communication, customer care, health and safety, lettings, and

management. This course will build a basis for her to embark on her real estate management degree in the future to advance her career.

Property management surveyor, Andy Cole said: "I am incredibly pleased to be joining such an established team as Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents. I look forward to passing on some of my knowledge to the younger surveyors progressing through the ranks." Harriet Hoyland, business administration apprentice said: "Upon finishing my GCSE's I didn't believe that A Level's were for me and was keen to get started in the world of work. At Bradley Hall I have the best of both worlds, not only am I able to get hands on experience of the corporate world, but I will also get qualifications while doing it. I am very much looking forward to my future at Bradley Hall."

To join the property management team at Bradley Hall send your CV and covering letter to [catherine.affleck@bradleyhall.co.uk](mailto:catherine.affleck@bradleyhall.co.uk)



# Bradley Hall Fundraiser Raises £50,000 for Local Charities

Northern property firm, Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents has raised fifty thousand pounds for two local charities at its annual fundraiser.

Bradley Hall held its fifth festive fundraising event at Newcastle Race Course in aid of Marie Curie's Newcastle Hospice, and Durham based children's charity, Heel and Toe.

Neil Hart, Bradley Hall's group managing director said, "Both Marie Curie and Heel and Toe are two very important charities which support local people.

Each of these organisations' services are in high demand and need continuous funds to keep going.

"We are very proud to be continuing our support of these two charities which have been struggling significantly due to the impact of Covid-19, so we need to do all we can to keep raising awareness and funds for these important services which provide essential support to our communities."

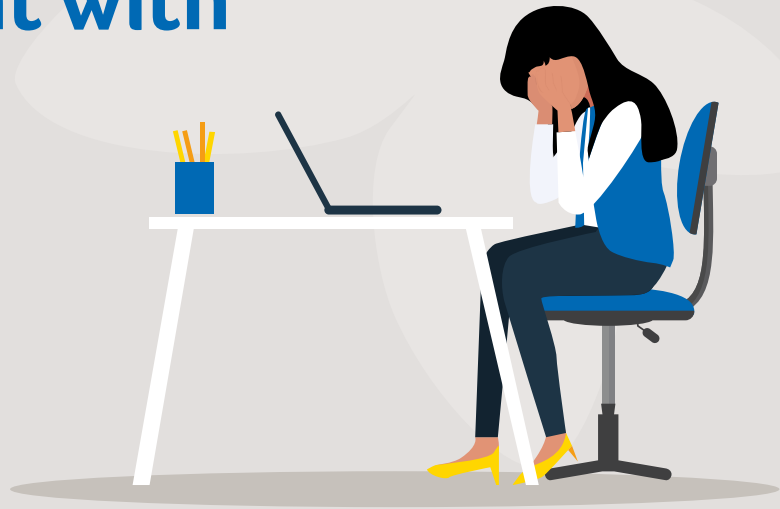








# Supporting your employees and colleagues through bereavement with Marie Curie



Care and support through terminal illness

The process of grieving has been made even more challenging due to the circumstances of the past couple of years. Many people have suffered with the loss of a loved one during the pandemic, often in painful circumstances with the inability to visit or say goodbye due to restrictions and very reduced numbers being allowed at funerals.

These extremely challenging conditions have meant that many have been unable to fully grieve losing a relative, partner or friend. Grief can affect people in very different and personal ways, including anxiety, exhaustion, anger and problems concentrating.

In 2021, Marie Curie discovered some shocking statistics about the impact of grief at work:

- 58% of employees feel their performance was affected by grief months after bereavement
- 54% of employees worried that talking time off after a bereavement would affect their job security
- 29% of employees were not confident in knowing what to say to a bereaved colleague
- 14% of HR professionals were not confident that would know what to say to a bereaved employee

Marie Curie, the UK's leading charity for care and support through terminal illness, has created a range of resources to provide employers with the tools they need to support people through bereavement.

Marie Curie's online bereavement toolkit includes advice on how to support a bereaved employee, resources which educate readers on how best to understand grief as well as tips on how to create a compassionate culture in the workplace.

Small changes can make a big difference to people who are grieving at work, the guides and resources available through Marie Curie enable those suffering with loss to understand what they are experiencing and the best ways to cope. Resources, booklets, guides, and videos such as these are a fantastic way to ensure that anyone suffering with grief and bereavement feel normal and

able to discuss their loss, as well as ways to remember their loved one.

If your organisation requires assistance to support a bereaved employee, Marie Curie offers advice on how to create a bereavement policy, what to do when a member of staff dies, guides on the physical symptoms of grief, why we need to talk about anger in grief and what anticipatory grief is – as well as a range of other ways to have a more compassionate outlook on what to do in the workplace when someone is grieving.

For more information on the resources available to help your organisation handle bereavement better in the workplace please visit [mariecurie.org.uk/grief-at-work](https://mariecurie.org.uk/grief-at-work)

Call Marie Curie for free on 0800 090 2309 to speak to a trained Support Line Officer or get ongoing support from a bereavement volunteer.

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# TOP TIPS FOR AVOIDING COWBOY BUILDERS

A TLF survey of UK residents finds that Newcastle named the 5th MOST LIKELY city to encounter a cowboy builder



By founder and managing director  
of specialist construction consultancy  
Consult North, Javaad Khalil

Updating the interior of your home can be exciting but stressful time. You can picture your dream kitchen or bedroom, but often you're putting your trust in a stranger – and to top it off, you're spending a significant amount of money.

Whilst the majority of builders are highly skilled in their role, very honest and upfront, unfortunately there are a few that aren't – and there is always a risk that you might accidentally hire a cowboy builder.

A study found that 56% of British homeowners fall victim to cowboy builders and Newcastle is ranked 5th most likely city to encounter a cowboy builder.

Home improvements were at a record high during the pandemic, in fact 77% of the UK population invested in their property in one way or another – a way for many to keep busy and improve the spaces that they were confined to.

Restrictions have eased giving us a glimpse of normal life, however, research shows UK homeowners are still renovating their safe havens.

If you happen to be one of the many still spending, we have put together some tips to avoid getting your fingers burnt.



### 1. RESEARCH

Many websites offer consumer reviews and information about tradespeople, such as Checkatrade and Trustmark. Do some homework online to see if your chosen builder has a good track record, understand that it takes time to find the right tradesperson.

**Tip:** Always double-check a builder's membership claims. Never take their word for it.

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### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

If you know of any family or friends that have recently had work done and are happy with it, then that's great. Unfortunately, not everyone is in this position. If that's the case, head on over to their Facebook page, or Google them to see their reviews. When you meet your potential builder, ask to see examples of similar, recent work they've completed, so you can see the standards of their work.

**Tip:** Visiting one of their completed projects and speaking to their previous client is invaluable in providing you with the ammunition you need to make a decision.

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### 3. THREE QUOTES AND A WATERTIGHT CONTRACT

Once you've shortlisted potential construction partners, it is standard practice to obtain three quotes and to ensure formal contracts cover the full scope of works.

Never leave your vision/building projects to chance or make agreements based on a handshake.

Contracts should detail everything from what is being built to what and how to pay a Builder. What insurances are required to what happens if they fail to complete on time.

**Tip:** If you don't have the time to do this or do not know where to start with contracts, hire a Professional Quantity Surveyor like ourselves to undertake this for you. Procuring construction works from the market can be a minefield, for more complex works it is always a good idea to get professional advice.

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### 4. CHECK THE ACCOUNTS

You are going to be spending you hard earned money. Ensure the builder is in good financial shape by reading over their annual accounts on the Companies House website.

**Tip:** You can also pay a professional for their time to carry out the due diligence on your behalf. Getting into contract with a company in stacks of debt is always a risk, if you don't check, you'll never know until it is too late.

---

### 5. SIGN A CONTRACT

A deal is not complete until the contract is signed. No matter how tempting it may be to start on site once you have found your partner in construction, don't!

Whether you're moving into a new home, or just want to re-design your existing place, it's extremely exciting; and hopefully our tips have given you the advice which will help you avoid a negative experience and give you that extra peace of mind.

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A CHAT WITH... ZOE  
POUTON

Director of Training  
The Social Co. Academy

**WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE SOCIAL CO. ACADEMY SOLVE FOR ITS CLIENTS?**

The Social Co Academy offers many opportunities for businesses. It can upskill current staff in marketing roles, allow business owners to be self sufficient on social media and encourage businesses to see a monetary return on investment.

**WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT?**

Seeing The Social Co Academy through as a project from start to finish was amazing for me. It started as a really small concept and I worked on it almost completely independently conducting all of my own research and utilising our team to teach myself all of the ins and outs needed to ensure that I am fully informed to give my clients everything they could possibly need in order to be successful.

**HOW HAS THE INDUSTRY CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER?**

I started out in the radio industry and moved from there into outdoor advertising so had a lot of background in traditional marketing methods. This tended to be the go-to for most marketing

managers and budgets were mainly allocated through these mediums.

After moving into social media it was rewarding to offer my clients a solution that was actually measurable and people could see a strong, direct return on investment. During the pandemic and post pandemic the market has moved even quicker as traditional methods took a huge dive because people were spending all of their time in the house with their mobile phones, when budgets were cut radio and outdoor advertising were first to go given the high price points and due to lower views throughout restrictions.

This meant that more businesses were forced to incorporate social into their marketing strategy in order to be seen.

**WHAT WERE YOUR CAREER AMBITIONS IN EARLY LIFE?**

From a really young age I witnessed my Mum in a really successful career in business and the way she conducted herself stayed with me throughout my childhood and into making choices of which path I wanted to take in my own career. I always knew I wanted to be involved in a business and marketing role and I thrive on being overwhelmingly busy

and making a difference in the business environment I am in.

My main ambition was to work in an international environment therefore I left uni and went into a graduate role with Enterprise Rent A Car given their international presence. I soon realised this wasn't the path I wanted to go down and I was more of a natural sales person and followed my mum's exact path into a sales role in advertising both in Radio and Outdoor.

Now that I have moved into social and even further into the training side of the business we would love to operate this on an international level.

**WHAT REGULARLY MOTIVATES YOU?**

The main thing I love about my career is seeing the difference the training provides to a business and seeing how it can transform their marketing strategies.

Social media can be a minefield for businesses and I love solving their problems and taking the weight off their shoulders. Seeing fantastic results will never get old.

**thesocialco.academy**





# New plans unveiled for 97-home extra care development in Washington

Proposal submitted by BH Planning & Design on behalf of Esh Construction to build the new homes on vacant land near the A182.



An application has been submitted to Sunderland City Council's planning department for a brand-new extra care development in Washington.

Proposed for vacant land off Moorway, east of the A182 Washington Highway, plans for the new neighbourhood include extra care apartments with communal facilities and bungalows. The new homes will allow local people with a range of care needs to live independently while benefitting from on-site care and support.

BH Planning & Design, a sister company of award-winning property firm Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents, submitted the planning application on behalf of clients Esh Construction. Director Mark Ketley said: "We are delighted to have submitted this planning application to Sunderland City Council on behalf of our clients, Esh Construction, for a much needed extra care development in Washington. The





North East, especially Sunderland, is a hub of development and regeneration and we are proud to be playing a supporting role in projects which will shape the future built-environment of the city.”

Councillor Graeme Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, said: “Sunderland is working hard to deliver the range of properties residents need, and we know that – as people age – accessible homes with the right support wrapped around them enables our older people to live independently for longer.

“I’m thrilled to see this scheme move forward, part of a wider housing strategy that will see 7,000 new homes delivered by 2030.”

The designs include an apartment building containing 84 one and two-bedroom apartments which will be spacious, wheelchair accessible and include fully fitted kitchens and shower rooms. A selection of two-bedroom bungalows will also be built on the site

for those who are more independent but wish to take advantage of the on-site facilities.

Plans have been submitted by Esh Construction working in partnership with SP&Architects. Esh’s Head of Land and Partnerships, Laura Devaney, said: “It is widely documented that our ageing society is causing a shortage of later life living options which means building new extra care housing – like the proposed development at Washington – is a high priority.

“Extra care schemes allow people to live in their own home and maintain their independence, while accessing on-site care should they need it. The communal living areas create a sense of community which can help combat the loneliness and social isolation that people often experience in later life.”

Care and support will be available 24/7 and all homes will have state of the art electronic care call facilities. The

on-site communal facilities feature a multi-functional social hub which includes a café, launderette and hair salon.

The proposal includes communal landscaped gardens, car parking for residents and visitors and a new public footpath from the northern perimeter of the site down to the vehicular entrance for the apartment building.

Solar photo voltaic panels will be installed on the apartment block and a contribution will be made to support general maintenance, habitat and wildlife improvements to the woodland area to the south of the site.

Devaney added: “A public consultation took place via leaflet drop to the local community with comments submitted via a designated website. The responses were widely positive with some notable interest in the new homes.”

To find out more about BH Planning and Design please visit [www.bhplanninganddesign.co.uk](http://www.bhplanninganddesign.co.uk)





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**smart**  
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# Smart Media Group signs cutting-edge data partnership

A FAST-GROWING outdoor business is tapping into the power of real-time traffic data, after signing an exclusive deal with a global data business.

North East based Smart Media Group, which includes Smart Outdoor- an out of home (OOH) media provider that has a network of 300 screens across the UK - has signed a new partnership with tech business Data Jam, that will allow it to draw on live data that counts the number of passers-by at any given time.

Data Jam provides small boxes, known as Jam Boxes, that are fitted to Smart screens, that enable the company to more accurately count the audience of its digital OOH screens in real-time. The Jam Boxes identify foot and vehicular traffic passing by the screens, and feed that data into reports that allow Smart Outdoor to help its customers understand the true reach of the ads it serves and create more targeted campaigns to reach its clients.

The deal represents Data Jam's first UK partnership with a media owner. It is thought to be the first time an OOH provider has been able to gather such accurate data, with Smart Outdoor utilising the technology across a number of its large digital screens, including those at Felling, the Tyne Tunnel and Newcastle.

Mark Catterall, chief executive of Smart Media Group, said: "This is a brilliant partnership that represents a truly unique opportunity to understand the actual impact of the campaigns we deliver for clients.

"The ethos of all Smart Media Group businesses is to use accurate data and insights to help us deliver the best possible value for money for our clients, and innovation such as this will achieve just that.

"We're proud to have struck up a

relationship with a hugely innovative global firm that will allow us to demonstrate to clients the return on investment for their campaigns, and we look forward to building on the early success of this partnership throughout 2022."

This is the first time Data Jam's Jam Boxes have been used in this way.

Arran Javed, founder of Data Jam, said: "We are excited to be working with such a forward-thinking company. Our Jam Boxes will unlock the true potential of the Smart Outdoor estate, by not only giving them and their clients a better understanding of the true numbers their inventory delivers, but will also provide real-time live audience data to Smart and their partners, allowing for real-time buying of OOH against true audience numbers.

"We live in an ever-changing world, and it has never been more difficult to understand the out-of-home audience, as no two days are the same. What is an average Tuesday these days?! With this partnership, Smart will fully understand the movement of those passing their screens. We look forward to working with the amazing team at Smart and seeing what the future holds."

Use of the technology will allow Smart to tailor packages to clients, providing the opportunity for them to opt to place their ads at times of high impact, based on accurate insights provided in real-time.

Mr Catterall added: "This really does build on our commitment to be the smartest possible provider of outdoor advertising, giving our customers rich

data and insight that allows them to achieve the greatest possible advantage from their campaigns."

Smart Outdoor is one of five companies that are either fully or part-owned by Mark Catterall, who founded Smart Media Group in 2019. Connected by a commitment to support clients with insight-led solutions and a customer-focused approach, the group also includes Smart Media, which offers media buying services across the UK and internationally; Smart Vision, which provides digital screens for hire for events; Smart Communications, a telecommunications business launched in 2021 and Smart Sanitiser, a sister company launched this year, that integrates high-impact digital screens into sanitisation stations that are now being rolled out across the country.

To find out more about Smart Outdoor's network of screens, which reach more than 5m people every week, visit [www.smartoutdoor.co.uk](http://www.smartoutdoor.co.uk)

## About Data Jam

Data Jam are experts in OOH data solutions. Data Jam provides real-time audience data for screen locations via installed bespoke devices which capture the number of mobile devices within 300m/950ft of the screen., allowing clients to gain a better understanding of the true audience numbers their inventory delivers.

For more information visit [www.data-jam.com](http://www.data-jam.com)





## Disused school transformed into stunning apartments

THE STUNNING restoration of Old Simpson Street School in Sunderland is complete, with eight luxury apartments now available as short-term holiday lets.

Developed by award-winning architects BDN, who carried out a full refurbishment of the Grade II property, the apartments bring together the building's beautiful original features with a stylish minimalist design.

The former school, built in 1867, stands on the edge of Riverside Sunderland, a key welcome-point to the city, and has been converted into residential and commercial space, with BDN having relocated its 20-strong team into the distinctive red-brick building.

Richard Marsden, MD of BDN, said: "We're delighted to have completed work on Simpson Street School. It's been a pleasure to breathe new life into a building with so much character and charm, and we look forward to seeing the apartments welcome people visiting the city."

To find out more about the apartments, contact Rochelle Richardson at [rochelle.richardson@bdnltd.com](mailto:rochelle.richardson@bdnltd.com)

## Muckle LLP strengthens its agriculture team with specialist senior appointment

Muckle LLP is delighted to announce that it's expanding the Agriculture, Estates, and Private Client Department in order to meet the increasing demand for its specialist legal services and to further develop new areas of work; in particular within the niche area of rural and agricultural secured lending.

With over 13 years' experience in the sector, Charlotte Patterson-Ryan joins the firm as a Senior Associate, enhancing the significant expertise already offered by the growing team, which is led by nationally renowned lawyer, David Towns.

Charlotte said: "I am thrilled to join such a dynamic team filled with energy and determination to succeed and I look forward to helping Muckle level the playing field within the regional and national Agriculture, Estates and Rural Property sector. For clients, it's an opportunity to seek solid and practical advice in an ever-shifting landscape from an agile, forward-thinking team who aren't frightened to speak from outside the echo chamber."



## Last chance for tees valley businesses to join innovative networking scheme

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen has urged business bosses to sign up to a popular scheme to help them work together and grow their companies as the deadline for applications draws close.

The Peer Networks scheme links likeminded business owners with counterparts across the region that may be facing similar opportunities and challenges, such as how to bounce back from the coronavirus pandemic.

The second phase of the scheme will close to registrations on 11 February and is delivered by Tees Valley Business – launched by Mayor Houchen as an easy-to-access one-stop shop for business support – and coordinated nationally by The Growth Company.

So far, 175 businesses have taken advantage of the initiative, which aims to drive the growth of small and medium-sized businesses by helping owners connect, and work together to tackle challenges, take advantage of opportunities, share knowledge and gain new insights.

Mayor Houchen said: "Now, more than ever, our brilliant local businesses need to come together and make sure they're doing all they can to recover following the coronavirus pandemic. All of our bosses have stories to tell, challenges to solve and solutions to share, which may prove invaluable for others in the region who are facing similar circumstances.

"Those leaders that have taken already advantage of the Peer Networks programme have had nothing but praise for it. It's fantastic to hear how it's making such an impact and helping companies to thrive, but I know there are still plenty of other small and medium-sized businesses that could benefit from this scheme and I'd urge them not to miss out.

"Of course, there's also much more support available for companies across Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool thanks to our Tees Valley Business team, including funding, advice and help to access more schemes to boost businesses, so check it out today."



## Husband and wife duo Alice and Andrew Hall set sights on growth with Rowen Homes

Forbes 30 Under 30 entrepreneur, Alice Rowen Hall is no stranger to building and scaling successful businesses.

Having in eight years gone from selling clothes out of her living room to generating sales in excess of £25 million for former business Pink Boutique. Alice, Andrew and the team are now witnessing similar success with their latest venture Rowen Homes, which in its first 18 months, has achieved top line sales of approximately £6.5 million.

A luxury online home store, the business curates and sells next level, glam interiors. Part of the Rowen Group, the business was founded during the pandemic in Aug 2020, alongside husband Andrew and is a real labour of love, driven by the duo's creative side and passion for all things interiors.

The group which initially comprised of three ventures including AllergyBox, Low Kal and Rowen Homes, has now streamlined to focus solely on the latter.



## Restaurant hjem is looking tasty for awards season

Restaurant Hjem has been selected as one of the UK's top 100 restaurants in the The Estrella Damm National Restaurant Awards 2021 while also being shortlisted at The Catey Awards 2021.

Restaurant Manager, Ally Thompson, says: "We were really delighted to get both these lovely pieces of news and everyone at Hjem is delighted.

"So many of these occasions have been held online over the past 16 months, so the thought of being able to sit alongside our industry peers and celebrate our collective successes is really quite a buzz!"

Launched in 2007, The Estrella Damm National Restaurant Awards celebrate the brilliance and vibrancy of the UK's eating out scene, rewarding the very best chefs, front of house staff and restaurants from across the country.

On the night of the awards, list of the 100 best restaurants in the UK are revealed as voted for by the Awards' academy of chefs, restaurateurs, and food writers.



## Mincoffs Solicitors appoint Commercial Director

Newcastle based law firm Mincoffs Solicitors has appointed Matthew Flinders as Commercial Director to support the firm's growth aspirations.

Matthew joins from RMT Accountants, where he was Head of Marketing and Business Development, and brings with him an impressive range of experience having worked closely for many years with prominent businesses, banks, and many other intermediaries.

His role will be to oversee the marketing and business development function at Mincoffs, as well as assisting in the firm's ambitious growth plans, and he will be pivotal in helping to drive strategic goals and vision for the future.

Commenting on the appointment, Matthew said "The Mincoffs team have a fantastic reputation along with an enviable client list. I have worked closely with many of the team over the years and their culture and values are very much aligned to my own. This is a great opportunity to be part of something really exciting and I am looking forward to working with the team going forward"

Senior Partner Paul Hughes added "We are delighted to have Matthew on board. His appointment forms a crucial part of our strategy for growth. He brings with him a wealth of commercial expertise that will help to drive the firm forward."





## Topping out ceremony marks milestone at £9.5m Wallsend Health Centre

A key milestone has been marked in the construction of a brand-new health centre in Wallsend as the building reaches its peak. Health partners, representatives from Assura and the project team joined Esh Construction on site to celebrate the latest progress in the £9.5 million development.

The three-storey steel structure and concrete roof deck is now complete, with over 112 tonnes of hot rolled steel used for the building's frame. Work on the scheme has been forging ahead since last year when Esh Construction commenced work on the site – next to the Forum Shopping Centre – working alongside the national primary care premises specialist, Assura.

Stuart Leslie, Divisional Director at Esh Construction, said: "This is the first development Esh will deliver in partnership with Assura, and we are pleased to celebrate this key milestone with all health partners. The next phase will see the internal fit out commence which will include the construction of partitions and installation of services, while externally the masonry work will get underway."

## Classic Ullswater Lakes Site Becomes The Inn Collection Group's First Acquisition Of 2022

The Inn Collection Group has completed its first acquisition of the year with the purchase of the 38-room The Glenridding Hotel in Ullswater.

The award-winning northern pubco has bought the lakeside venue for an undisclosed value, taking its Lake District portfolio to nine and its overall site count to 28, as it continues to roll out strategic 'buy and build' growth plans.

The completion of The Glenridding Hotel cements The Inn Collection Group's standing as the leading company in the UK for individual acquisitions and the pub company with the highest number of bedrooms per site in the country.

Ward Hadaway corporate partner

Imogen Holland provided legal advice on The Glenridding Hotel acquisition with Neil Hart at Bradley Hall advising on pre diligence.

Neil Hart, group managing director at Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents said: "We are proud to support a firm which is dedicated to acquiring, developing and providing outstanding venues in line with its ambitious growth strategy and in creating new jobs in the hospitality sector is like no other organisation – with the Glenridding Hotel in Cumbria will be no exception to this. I look forward to continuing our well established partnership on upcoming projects."



## More Brits insure their homes than their lives, says Brewin Dolphin



According to new research from wealth manager, Brewin Dolphin, only 32% of people in the UK have life insurance compared to 64% who have taken out an insurance policy to cover their homes.

Showing that there is still some truth in the old adage 'an Englishman's home is his castle', it would seem we place more importance on insuring our homes than our lives.

Lee Clark, financial planner at Brewin Dolphin, says: "It is not unusual for people

to be reluctant to think about their own mortality, especially younger people in their 30s and 40s. However, it is important for people during the accumulation phase of their lives, which is generally those under 50, to think about protecting their financial journey. Taking out life insurance and critical illness cover can help to transfer risk to an insurance provider. It is a way to help protect the journey towards meeting your financial goals."



## Version 1 announce 200 new jobs in boost for region’s tech and digital sector

With the support of Invest Newcastle and £1m from the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Ireland-founded digital transformation and technology provider Version 1 is bringing two hundred new jobs to Newcastle and setting up a base in the region.

The announcement is the second big tech jobs boost for the city in the first few weeks of 2022 and follows several big announcements last year. It reflects the confidence investors across the globe have in the region’s burgeoning tech sector—one of the fastest growing in the

UK. Since first engaging with Version 1, Invest Newcastle who are part of NewcastleGateshead Initiative has helped the company to benchmark Newcastle against other locations, highlighting the region’s technology sector strengths and supported them through the grant process with North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) which helped them get the full £1m. In addition, Invest Newcastle has hosted visits and provided introductions to key stakeholders within the business community.



## Ward Hadaway strengthens social housing team across the North

Law firm Ward Hadaway has further strengthened its social housing team to support its continued growth and provide a wider strategic service to clients in this sector.

The team has seen more than 45% growth in turnover following a number of significant new contract wins – including recent success with North Star Housing Group and Castles and Coasts Housing Association. It now operates its social housing offering across all three regional offices in Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle.

Ward Hadaway’s social housing team,

part of the broader Built Environment group at the UK Top 100 firm, is considered one of the largest, most-established legal teams working in the sector in the north with a team of 19.

Partner Julia Thomson, based in the Newcastle office has been appointed as head of social housing and has overall responsibility for leading the team across all three regions. She is recognised as a leading social housing lawyer experienced in advising registered providers on all aspects of development and operational property matters.

## Wealth advisor named one of UK’s best for second year running

Senior Wealth Adviser, Michael Carrick from Newcastle-based wealth management and property lending specialists Tier One Capital (Tier One) has been named as one of the UK’s top ranked leading financial professionals and advisers for the second successive year.

Michael, who has been a financial adviser and wealth management expert for more than 30 years, has appeared in the latest VouchedFor 2022 guide to the UK’s top rated financial advisers. The guide has been published in conjunction with The Times newspaper and compiled using feedback from clients on the VouchedFor website.

Michael has continued to score an impressive 4.9 out of 5 based on client reviews in 2021, maintaining the positive reviews he has received since joining Tier One in 2019 as Senior Wealth Adviser, following the company’s acquisition of Carrick Financial Management, a well-known and widely respected IFA business in the region.





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# LEVELLING UP OR PAINTING OVER THE CRACKS?

By Neil Hart  
Group Managing Director,  
Bradley Hall



As the pandemic subsides and Boris & Co become all partied out, levelling up is now taking centre stage. More announcements are being made even more questions are being raised as to whether this allegedly transformative initiative launched by the Government will actually serve the North East and our people.

The levelling up agenda remains conveniently vague but admittedly the '12 missions' outlined seem attractive. But objectively and realistically – will they work for our region? With little-to-no targets to decrease unemployment and child poverty, two very problematic issues for which the North East is worst in the UK, it begs the question of whether the true fundamental issues which continue to spiral within our communities are actually being addressed.

The chancellor said that the government would provide “an unprecedented economic boost across the UK”, creating better pay and greater pride in our communities. Our region's strengths and weaknesses are fairly bespoke and solutions for one will unlikely work for another. Perhaps the government is taking too much of a broad overview, instead of drilling down into what will create the results we need for each of our regions.

It has been reported that Durham could be one of the first local authorities to receive a county deal including more powers moved from London to the council, with the North of Tyne mayoral area joining forces with Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

Part of the Levelling Up plan included handing power and resources to local leaders. As it stands now do all of our local leaders have the capability to identify

issues, create solutions and apply the desperately required changes we need to address the economic issues we are facing. Are they equipped to handle an unprecedented amount of responsibility and accountability?

On the face of it, it certainly seems as though the North is being left out in the cold yet again. 'Levelling up' our communities, or more accurately evenly 'levelling them out' and sharing the prosperity doesn't look like it's a priority. It's hard to trust a government which has continued to betray us so much over the past few years especially. The fact that the vast majority of areas which were awarded a share of the first £1bn of funding, 39 out of 45, went to conservative constituencies – including Rishi Sunak's affluent constituency of Richmond and Yorkshire- gives us just a hint of nepotism. As a mainly labour-led region I fear that if this continues our issues with worsen.

To be fair, the lack of funding for the region doesn't seem for a lack of trying. Bid writing projects are costing our local authorities a huge amount to submit, with many being unsuccessful. The Northern Echo revealed that Durham County Council spent the most out of any North East local authorities, totalling an eye-watering £163,575 – which actually proved to be money well spent as they were awarded £20m to go towards over £30m of works.



In total, over £300,000 was spent by councils in outsourcing bid-writing.

Controversial 'Non-mainstream media' outlet, Byline Times, revealed that the North East of England won only five of 105 funding opportunities in the first tranche of the Government's Levelling Up Fund – also revealing that only 5.8% of the first £1.7bn is being invested by the scheme in the North East.

This happened despite the North East needing it most – with the region consistently having one of the highest levels of deprivation, the lowest average incomes and high poverty rates. The region also has one of the lowest GVA ratings per hours worked in the UK – the exact issues which the government is said to want to resolve with the Levelling Up initiatives.

In other statistics, the most recent ONS report on disposable income revealed that “while on {the national} average, each person had £30,256 available to spend or save; the North East had the lowest at £17,096, which compares with a UK average of £21,433.”

Now, bear with me as I go around the houses slightly to reach my point. We've had several announcements made regarding significant factories launching in the region, which will secure thousands of direct, indirect and induced jobs during construction and following launch.



Britishvolt is one of two major UK battery manufacturing projects that has secured approximately £300m in funding so far, alongside an expansion of an existing plant at Sunderland owned by China's Envision that supplies to Nissan. The plant will employ about 3,000 workers when it is at full capacity in around 2028. The first batteries are scheduled to start production in 2024 to take advantage of rising demand ahead of the UK's 2030 ban on new cars without a battery.

Another recent announcement has included the latest Amazon factory in Tees Valley. Amazon has not yet confirmed the number of jobs at the Teesside site, but it is now believed up to 1,300 permanent and a further 1,000 seasonal roles could be created.

Even when we look deeper into fantastic announcements like the Freeport in Teesside, unravelling the facts the Office for Budget Responsibility said that in October 2021: "given historical and international evidence, we have assumed that the main effect of freeports will be to alter the location rather than the volume of economic activity." So will this just shift activity from the Port of Tyne to the new Freeport?

Our research has shown that according to [www.checksalary.co.uk](http://www.checksalary.co.uk) the average production worker salary in the North East is £20,341.63 which is fairly in

line with the national average production worker salary £20,557.98.

Based on a single person, taking into account rising living costs, and based on average rents of £578 in the region, plus average bills including council tax, gas and electric bills, TV licence, water, an average food spend of £175 per month, the average finance cost of a car and filling the tank totals £1,281. The average 'take-home' monthly wage for a North East production worker is £1,458.02, leaving approximately £177 disposable income per month – £2,124 per year.

New figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the North East's unemployment rate in the three months to the end of December 2021 were 5.6%, a fall of 0.1% from the previous reading but well above the national average of 4.1%. The number of people claiming unemployment benefits in the region was 84,045. I suspect that, given the thousands of roles which will become available across the new factories in the North East, that it will attract workers from other areas of the country. This then provides another challenge in regards to overpopulation and housing in a market that is already suffering from high demand and low available stock.

Charity End Child Poverty Overall, revealed that in the North East the child poverty rate has risen by over a third, from

26% to 37% over five years, moving from just below the UK average to the second highest of any region. A third of the overall increase happened in the latest year (2019/20) with many low-paid workers pushed below the poverty line by the freeze in their in-work benefits.

This really doesn't feel like we're 'levelling up'.

A key part of the solution could be more skilled and well-paid jobs which will come from more investment in innovation and education. One of the factors which have been attributed to the productivity gap is huge difference between what local governments and universities spend on research and development across regions. London spends more than twice as much as the North East, with Scotland, East and the South East not far behind. The worrying part is that the latest plan announced in February 2022 promises to have only 200,000 more people a year completing high-quality skills training in England by 2030.

So, the question is – are we levelling up or just painting over the cracks? The tough reality of the above is that systemic challenges and issues have built up over generations, many of which will take decades to unravel and won't be resolved by creating low-paid job opportunities.



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