

# SUPPORTING BUSINESSES AND CREATING JOBS

7 YEARS OF IMPACT



## HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL LEADER'S LETTER



Innovation, enterprise and support are vital for the success of any new business. When Harborough District Council began developing the Harborough Innovation Centre in 2010 our aim was to reach out to fledgling businesses and provide a place which would allow them to thrive and grow – while at the same time offering the right support to help them achieve.

Today, the Innovation Centre continues to offer fantastic office space, and associated facilities, with on-hand business support so start-up firms and entrepreneurial projects can grow and prosper.

The Centre, situated in a prime location in south Leicestershire, provides a great base to ensure businesses across the Harborough district can flourish in the competitive business environment.

Over the years, the Council has worked closely with the Centre's management company and helped fund a number of business workshops and networking events, along with competitions such as Pioneer 10 which encourages entrepreneurs and other projects to come to the fore.

I am extremely proud of what has been achieved so far and what will continue to be achieved. A thriving business community is important for our local economy and the Harborough Innovation Centre plays a vital role in this.

We are committed to supporting businesses where we can – through this building and, in the future, through our Grow on Space building too – and I look forward to hearing about the future

success of those businesses which make use of these excellent facilities.

**Councillor Neil Bannister, Leader  
of Harborough District Council**



## OUR STORY

Harborough Innovation Centre (HIC) is located on the Airfield Business Park in Market Harborough. Developed and owned by Harborough District Council, it has been a vibrant hub of innovation and enterprise in the district since 2011. It is currently home to 69 companies and has supported more than 230 innovative businesses since it opened.

At the heart of Harborough Innovation Centre's success is the targeted and tailored business support early stage and growing SMEs receive: strategic coaching and mentoring for the innovators leading their businesses delivered by business growth experts.

Funded by Harborough District Council, ERDF and East Midlands Development Agency, it is managed by Oxford Innovation, the UK's leading innovation centre operator.

### Centre Offering

The centre can accommodate a wide range of companies in just over 23,000ft<sup>2</sup>, providing office space and studios ranging from 157ft<sup>2</sup> to 1,065ft<sup>2</sup>. The offices and studios are ideal for companies with 1-15 employees where they benefit from a flexible, professional, supported office environment. The centre also offers shared office space and virtual office services. Occupancy is currently 98% with a dynamic mix of 69 businesses using the centre.

*The Innovation Centre really stood out because it offered the quality offices that we needed, the flexibility to meet the needs of the company's expansion plans and Harborough Innovation Centre had a great team behind it.*

Sandra Lovelock, Elecosoft

### Business Support

HIC launched an annual programme of support at the centre in 2016 called Pioneer 10 Harborough, which is our intensive accelerator programme of business support for start-ups, entrepreneurs, and SME's. Pioneer 10 is a fully-funded programme led by inspiring business experts featuring workshops, tools, support and one-to-one business growth reviews. It has been designed for small, ambitious businesses in the Harborough District. Based at Harborough Innovation Centre, Pioneer 10 is operated by Oxford Innovation and supported by Harborough District Council. The programme is available for entrepreneurs and businesses at all stages to help drive growth and development.

Those selected for the programme receive free coaching, mentoring and support on all aspects of business growth, access to a local business mentor, and the top two Pioneers receive free shared office space at the Harborough Innovation Centre for 12 months.

There have been some significant outcomes from the Pioneer 10 programme

in terms of company expansions, new company formations and businesses growing into other offices locally. See the next page for the impact the business support has had.

Additionally, one-on-one business support is delivered at the centre by the Innovation Director and includes business planning, access to and raising finance, product, process and service development including IP advice and technology transfer where appropriate, marketing, PR and brand development and developing a wide and active business contacts network.

As well as individual coaching and specialist technical support, HIC runs an active workshop and events programme. This has helped to establish the Centre as the go-to hub for businesses in the district, providing much needed growth support for innovative early stage and scaling businesses across the Harborough District.





*The ongoing support from Pioneer 10 has been amazing. I have been surrounded by experts who have strength in areas that I have no experience in, and this has allowed me to accelerate the growth of my business. There is no way the business would be where it is today without the support of Pioneer 10.*

Will Prentice, Elite Scooters



*The help and guidance we received from the programme so far has been brilliant. Our mentor has been great fun to work with and helped us set strategic priorities to scale our business. The experts have been so generous in sharing their time and knowledge with us, helping us to improve the way we operate and attract new clients.*

Terry Streater, Oakwood Training



**ABOUT THE CENTRE**

276  
PEOPLE

58  
BUSINESSES

57  
OFFICES

18,205  
FT<sup>2</sup>



**BUSINESS SUPPORT**

26  
WORKSHOPS  
AND MASTERCLASSES RUN

734  
ATTENDEES

1500+  
RESOURCES DOWNLOADED  
FROM THE PIONEER 10 WEBSITE

110+  
BUSINESSES RECEIVED  
OUTREACH BUSINESS SUPPORT



**ECONOMIC INPUT**

7  
YEARS SINCE OPENING

122  
BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN BASED  
IN HIC

796  
NEW JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED IN 7  
YEARS

54  
BUSINESSES HAVE GROWN INTO  
LARGER WORKSPACES IN THE AREA

£19.3M  
ADDITIONAL GVA\* CREATED  
THROUGH LOCAL JOBS

£1.3M  
FROM HARBOROUGH DISTRICT  
COUNCIL TOWARDS BUSINESS  
SUPPORT AND OFFICE SPACE FOR SMES



**FUTURE**

£7.5M  
GROW ON SPACE

200  
NEW JOBS TO BE  
CREATED OVER NEXT 5 YEARS

\*Gross Value Added (GVA) is the measure of the additional value of goods and services produced in the Harborough District through HIC customers creating high value jobs in the area.

## CENTRE PROFILE

Set in the picturesque town of Market Harborough at the gateway entrance of the bustling Airfield Business Park; Harborough Innovation Centre is the model location for ambitious early stage business.

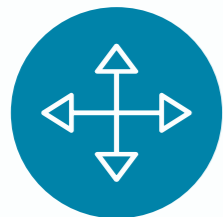
Customers take advantage of high specification offices, virtual office services, meeting and conference facilities, and inclusive on-site business support. Complete with excellent transport links to London, Leicester and the North, Harborough Innovation Centre is a vibrant central hub dedicated to helping businesses thrive.

When customers are away from the office they need to be sure their business is in good hands. HIC's support team includes professional receptionists who are there to assist by answering calls and forwarding messages, greeting visitors and managing mail and deliveries. This type of administration support means they have

more time to focus on the needs of their business.

Depending on what stage the business is at, the on-site Innovation Directors are also on hand to provide professional advice and guidance to help them get to where they want to be. The centre offers tailored packages with access to a team of business coaches to assist with those tricky decisions that are not always easy to make on your own.

Starting or expanding a business is a major decision requiring time, dedication, focus and financial investment. Location is also important and can influence the future success of a business so it's important to get it right. With a flexible range of office solutions, low risk flexible leases, all-inclusive pricing and a dedicated support team of business professionals, Harborough Innovation Centre makes complete sense for any forward-thinking business.



A RANGE OF  
OFFICE SPACE



FLEXIBLE LEASES  
AVAILABLE WITH 1  
MONTHS NOTICE



SHARED AND  
VIRTUAL OFFICE  
PACKAGES



FREE ON-SITE  
PARKING



MEETING  
ROOMS



24 HOUR  
ACCESS



ALL INCLUSIVE  
PRICING



ACCESS TO  
BUSINESS  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES

## HOW TWO BIRDS FLEW THE NEST AFTER A SUCCESSFUL START AT HARBOROUGH INNOVATION CENTRE

What happens when you mix a knack of engineering with a love of all things gin? Just ask Mark Gamble, co-founder of the award-winning spirits brand, Two Birds. Born from Mark and Lyn's home-based distillery in Market Harborough, Two Birds is now a national renowned business, creating a fine and eclectic array of gins, vodkas and absinthes.

Union Distillers creates a number of top-quality spirits for some of the best independent retailers in the country along with its own Two Birds brand.

After creating his first successful gin, which won Top Gold Award at the Craft Distillers Alliance within just two months of production, Mark needed a base for his ever-growing enterprise. Living locally to Harborough Innovation Centre, organising a viewing was an easy decision, and Mark knew immediately that HIC would provide the ideal incubator for his new business.

As one of the first occupants at Harborough District Council's new innovation centre, Mark found being based at HIC paramount to getting the business off the ground in its early stages. The flexibility of a license with just one month's notice period gave the company the ability to grow and change without being tied down. As a small team, the on-site reception was immensely helpful, knowing that calls and deliveries will be handled no matter who was in the office at the time.

Two Birds moved rapidly from the smallest office in Harborough Innovation Centre to the biggest. Within 18 months the company was ready to graduate to a 3000sq ft distillery in Market Harborough, now complete with its own gin-making workshop, open to the public.

In just under five years, Two Birds and Union Distillers have grown exponentially, from producing a few boxes of gin a week to shipping out pallets-full of different spirits to retailers all over the UK. Though the business has moved on, Two Birds still has a virtual membership at HIC to handle phone calls when the distillery is busy.

### THE BEST THING ABOUT THE CENTRE IS HOW CONVENIENT AND UNCOMPLICATED EVERYTHING IS.

Based on their incredible success, Mark recommends the centre to any start-up business looking for a professional and flexible launch pad to get their business up-and-running.

"The best thing about the centre is how convenient and uncomplicated everything is. You can come and go as you please, reception is always on-hand to answer the phone, and there are so many networking opportunities. You can so easily interact with your neighbouring companies – it's no different to your neighbours on the street."



## HIC HELPS JEREMY WITH THE SPORTING EDGE

Sporting Edge has been a valued customer of HIC since the beginning, when founder Jeremy Snape moved the company into the building on its first day of opening. "I wouldn't say we brushed past the cement mixer on the way in," said Jeremy, "because it was probably wheeled out five minutes before we arrived, but we were the first in."

In the years since, Jeremy has grown Sporting Edge into one of the country's leading providers of sports psychology and business consultancy services. The list of clients is impressive, and includes BMW, Barclays, McKinsey, GSK, England Rugby and the South African cricket team.



So, did Jeremy envisage building a premium consultancy that would become a market leader? "It's what I aspired to," he said. "Has it been a straightforward journey to creating it? Definitely not. Have I needed every ounce of resilience and networking and persistence and negotiation to get to where we've got to? Definitely. But it makes me proud to say we've worked with and are trusted by some of the world's best brands."

Jeremy's interest in psychology began during his first career as a cricketer. Having experienced the highs and lows of his chosen sport, he formulated the idea that, however good they are, everyone has a psychological breaking point, and that being able to get over that is the key to success.

"I started to look at how to train in that area because I thought that to be able to coach people and help them deliver success under pressure would be a great service, and one that wasn't being offered at the time," he said.

After studying for a master's degree at Loughborough University and retiring from the game, Jeremy established the business and

moving into HIC was an integral part of the process. "To begin with, it was just me and a PA," said Jeremy. "I started the business at home in the garage and then moved here.

For me, as an entrepreneur, you need a clear head and a clear space to be able to come up with the ideas, make the decisions, make the phone calls. So to have a designated office is much better than working from home because there are obvious distractions there.

### HAVING A PROFESSIONAL PLACE WHERE YOU CAN HOST CLIENTS, WHERE PEOPLE CAN PARK, EAT IN THE RESTAURANT, AND THERE ARE MEETING ROOMS IS INVALUABLE.

"Having a professional place where you can host clients, where people can park, eat in the restaurant, and there are meeting rooms is invaluable. We also use a number of services providers from HIC and it's a lively hub for people to collaborate. We use web and brand design, legal support, promotional materials and exhibition manufacturers, so it's been very helpful."

Sporting Edge is looking to grow even further, and HIC could play a part in that. Jeremy has already had talks about moving into the grow-on space. Jeremy concluded: "For me, Harborough Innovation Centre is a great environment in which to think, to make great decisions and collaborate with other entrepreneurs to help your business grow."

## SWORDFISH MARKETING GROWING THROUGH HIC'S COMMUNITY

Working at Harborough Innovation Centre has lots of operational advantages for its businesses. But sometimes we forget that there are less immediately obvious benefits to being part of the community here. Steve Chapman, Tina Gagg and Ollie Chapman of Swordfish Marketing have been here for four years now, during which they've come to appreciate what makes the centre special.

Steve originally moved into the shared office for three weeks to try it out. In no time at all, he felt that HIC was a place he could really do business. He appreciates the building as a place of work, of course, but points to other benefits that he didn't anticipate.



Firstly, there's the networking side of things. "We've ended up doing quite a few collaborations with other people in the building," he said. "One of the earliest was with Matt Anslow, our resident GDPR expert, when he was first here. We were able to bounce a few ideas off him and he's helped us out and helped our clients out." Other HIC residents that Swordfish has worked with include accountants Mayfield & Co, CAP Awards, Code String, Octagon and Kemsley & Company.

For Steve, the café is at the heart of the network, making it one of the most important parts of the building. "You can't underestimate the importance of the café as a hub," he said. "It's more than just a place to grab some food. It creates opportunities. What you come to recognise if you sit in the café long enough, is that it's the centre's version of Piccadilly Circus. Stay there long enough and you'll meet everyone."

Swordfish has even won business from an external customer thanks to being in the café!

The reception team are also a great help, he said. "Being able to ask the centre team if there's anyone here who does a certain type of job is very helpful. And there usually is. We've also been the beneficiary of people asking that question then arriving at our door."

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Tina contrasted HIC to some other shared office spaces they've visited: "When we've been to visit them, you find that the people on reception often don't know much about who's in the building. So the support of the reception team here makes a real difference."

Add in the range of events that the centre offers, which offer practical business advice and more networking opportunities, and you can see why the centre has grown to house so many companies, and why we're looking at adding even more space in future. "I hadn't realised until I came back as to how involved the local council are in it. My council taxes are being used to support my local area. Things like HIC bring people into the town and put HDC on the map. There is a real risk of out-commuting to London. I don't know how economic development works but it clearly is working."

## A YEAR OF GROWTH FOR LIBERTY PR

The team at Liberty PR celebrated their first anniversary as residents of Harborough Innovation Centre in July 2018, and it was a successful first year.

Having taken the decision to set up their own agency, founders Lisa Jolly and David Watts have been busy ever since, and have taken on three new team members to cope with the work already.

Along the way, they've really appreciated the convenience offered by being based at HIC, and the help and support the centre team has given them. This support is provided by Harborough District Council, which owns the centre and funds its business support provision, providing the basis for expert business advice, mentoring and workshops.

To begin with, Liberty needed an office they could move straight into and get on with business. "We came to the centre and said that we needed an office straight away," says Lisa. "We were immediately very busy, so we needed to have somewhere with working facilities and broadband, and we couldn't wait around for any of that."

"When we started we were able to just come and plug in. If we'd gone somewhere else and had to start from scratch with agreements, broadband and everything else that we need, it would've hampered our ability to do the job we needed to do immediately."

Since moving in, they've come to appreciate the sense of camaraderie in the building, as well as the chance to work with other companies on projects. "One of the things the centre brings us is the ability to be full service," says David. "We're working on a project now with a marketing company that's based in the building. We can be in and out of each other's offices when we're working on a project."

That spirit of collaboration is really important. It's something we get in the centre that we wouldn't anywhere else."

**“THAT SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION IS REALLY IMPORTANT. IT'S SOMETHING WE GET IN THE CENTRE THAT WE WOULDN'T ANYWHERE ELSE.”**

The team also finds the centre an excellent place to receive clients. David says: "The standard of presentation here is a massive help. We encourage clients to come to us. For a start-up company, we didn't think we'd be in a position to invite clients to visit us, because we'd have been in a small office. The centre allowed us to be more professional."

Lisa and David are keen to expand, and they feel that the centre offers them the flexibility to do that. "We're ambitious and we want to grow," says Lisa. "We have a lot of people that we're talking to at the moment, and there's one or two things that could mark the next stage of our growth."

But they're happy for HIC to be part of that growth. "There hasn't been a single day since we opened Liberty PR that we doubted this was the right thing to do," says David. "I can't imagine what it would've been like to have been somewhere else. We certainly think of this as our medium-term future, rather than just a stepping stone."



## GROWTH IN THE FUTURE, BUILDING ON THE PAST

When Helena Kelly started Heritage Archaeology in April 2018, she knew there was only one place for her, having been based in Harborough Innovation Centre in a previous role.

Heritage Archaeology provide historic environment consultancy to housing and infrastructure developers. Having worked in a number of large consultancies, Helena wanted to focus on what she enjoyed doing: researching and advising clients on heritage issues as part of their planning, rather than managing people.

In 2012, Helena joined an agency providing historic environment consultancy who were looking to establish a Midlands office. Living locally, she drew up a list of 6 serviced offices to review in Harborough, Rugby, Leicester and Northampton. HIC was the first she visited, and it set the benchmark to compare the others against.



When asked why HIC was so impressive, Helena said: “We were a regional office for a larger company but in essence it was a start-up. I was really attracted by the transparent licence, business rates relief and the community in the centre. We were in HIC for 2-3 years and it was wonderful. When I needed somewhere for myself it was a no brainer.”

Helena has strong plans for future growth, looking to employ 3 or 4 people over the coming years all offering high value consultancy. She has already secured high profile clients, who are also impressed with what HIC has to offer. She said: “A lot of my clients are big companies and know that reflects well

on my business. National Grid came in for a meeting and they were so impressed with the reception, wifi and café, it gives us a real professional feel.”

Helena has thrown herself into the vibrant business community based in the Centre. She regularly attends the breakfast meetings and sees the social interaction as being really important taking away the loneliness many early stage entrepreneurs feel.

**“ I MEET WITH THE INNOVATION DIRECTORS AND THEY GIVE ME MORE CONFIDENCE. I APPLIED FOR A PLACE ON THE PIONEER 10 PROGRAMME AND I’M THRILLED TO BE GETTING THE SUPPORT FROM THE MENTORS. I’M REALLY ENJOYING IT.**

The most important factor for Helena basing Heritage Archaeology at HIC is the business support on offer. “When I was originally at the HIC, I didn’t really access the business support. But now the centre team are driving me to use the services. I meet with the Innovation Directors and they give me more confidence. I applied for a place on the Pioneer 10 programme and I’m thrilled to be getting the support from the mentors. I didn’t know that level of support was available, and I wouldn’t have proactively looked for it. I’m really enjoying it. “

She is also impressed with the role Harborough District Council have played in creating HIC. “I hadn’t realised until I came back as to how involved the local council are in it. My council taxes are being used to support my local area. Things like HIC bring people into the town and put HDC on the map. There is a real risk of out-commuting to London. I don’t know how economic development works but it clearly is working. “

## HARBOROUGH’S GROW ON SPACE TO OPEN IN 2019

Grow on Space to help businesses expand and employ more staff – set to bring £20million into the Harborough district economy – is set to open in late 2019.

The project will see the development of a new commercial building that would provide office space for businesses looking to grow and move into larger accommodation in the district.

The Grow on Space project is expected to create around 230 jobs and bring £20million into the local economy over the next five years.

Leader of the District Council Neil Bannister said securing the funding was the result of a huge amount of hard work, over a number of years, by Harborough

District Council and thanked all for their commitment in achieving this successful outcome.

The Grow on Space building, which would be located at Compass Point Business Park in Market Harborough, is expected to be completed in late 2019 and will be built to high environmental standards, BREEAM Excellent.

When complete, office suites will be available ranging from 1,000-3,000 ft<sup>2</sup> with flexibility to meet business demand.

The Grow on Space follows the success of the Harborough Innovation Centre, which Harborough District Council developed and opened in 2011.



BUILD PROJECT



ERDF FUNDING HAS BEEN SECURED



LLEP FUNDING SECURED



FUNDING FROM HDC





“ BEING ABLE TO ASK THE CENTRE TEAM IF THERE’S ANYONE HERE WHO DOES A CERTAIN TYPE OF JOB IS VERY HELPFUL. AND THERE USUALLY IS. WE’VE ALSO BEEN THE BENEFICIARY OF PEOPLE ASKING THAT QUESTION THEN ARRIVING AT OUR DOOR.

Steve Chapman, Founder  
Swordfish Marketing

“ FOR ME, HARBOROUGH INNOVATION CENTRE IS A GREAT ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO THINK, TO MAKE GREAT DECISIONS AND COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ENTREPRENEURS TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW.

Jeremy Snape, Founder  
Sporting Edge

“ THE BEST THING ABOUT THE CENTRE IS HOW CONVENIENT AND UNCOMPLICATED EVERYTHING IS. YOU CAN COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE, RECEPTION IS ALWAYS ON-HAND TO ANSWER THE PHONE, AND THERE ARE SO MANY NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES. YOU CAN SO EASILY INTERACT WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURING COMPANIES – IT’S NO DIFFERENT TO YOUR NEIGHBOURS ON THE STREET.

Mark Gamble, Founder  
Two Birds

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