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# Rushcliffe

Digital High Street Programme

Success stories



Rushcliffe  
Borough Council

east midlands  
chamber

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UP**



*"It's been great to see businesses within Rushcliffe borough engage with the project. Many have learnt or improved existing skills which will equip them to offer the great service digitally which they currently provide in person."*

**Steve Phillips,**  
Digital High Street Adviser,  
East Midlands Chamber

## Helping our high streets to flourish

The Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme provides fully-funded support to high-street businesses across the Borough of Rushcliffe. The project is funded by Rushcliffe Borough Council through the UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and delivered in partnership with East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire).

The programme is designed to help businesses implement modern forms of online trading that complement, rather than replace, their high street presence.

### It has offered businesses:

- One-to-one support from a Digital Adviser to help develop and implement a plan
- Up to 15 hours of expert consultancy
- A website and social media audit
- Digital know-how events and webinars
- One year's complimentary membership of East Midlands Chamber

So far, the project has supported 51 businesses. Some 41 businesses have benefitted from one-to-one support from a Digital Adviser and 25 businesses have received expert consultancy.

Purchasing habits are changing, with fewer in-store visitors and a move towards online transactions. The support offered by the programme is giving businesses access to the know-how and funding needed to adapt at pace.

## Diane Beresford

### Deputy Chief Executive

East Midlands Chamber  
(Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire)





# The Fruit Basket

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Sector</b>              | Food retail, wholesale & distribution                            |
| <b>Location</b>            | West Bridgford   |
| <b>Number of employees</b> | 15   |
| <b>Support received</b>    | Business Adviser and one-to-one social media consultancy support |

Social media is seen as a key way in which to stay at the forefront of customers' minds but making sure the right messaging is posted at the right time, and consistently, can be a challenge. Like any small business, there are always lots of plates to spin at any one time; more so in the Hyman brothers' case as, along with The Fruit Basket and its multiple strands, they also own West Bridgford's No 8 Deli.

## Support from the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme

Support from the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme has come in a number of ways.

By attending the online training on 'selecting the right social media for your business', Rachel, who is responsible for marketing in the business, has gained an insight into how to capitalise on her current approach to Facebook and Instagram.

## Background

The Fruit Basket is a family-run business offering a quality range of fresh produce, dairy, eggs, bakery and dry store goods. Over the last fifteen years, brothers Jonathan and Ben Hyman have steadily expanded the business from a bricks-and-mortar shop. It now offers online retail, as well as wholesale & distribution to restaurants and hotels across the East Midlands.

## Challenges

The business has always been well-loved amongst local residents; never more so than through lockdown. During that time, the business introduced the opportunity to buy online through its free delivery service across Nottinghamshire.

It also invested in extending its product range, to cheeses, charcuterie and antipasti, and introduced a refill station allowing customers to reduce their use of packaging for items from nuts and seeds to household cleaning products.

As well as attracting new customers, the challenge now is to retain those who were first attracted during lockdown who might otherwise return to supermarket shopping.



The training led on to one-to-one consultancy support from one of the digital consultants, Paul Ince, who was chosen by East Midlands Chamber to support the project. Paul has undertaken an audit of the business's current social media activity, and his subsequent social media strategy will ensure the business pours its efforts into those social platforms and campaigns most likely to bring the best return.

Time spent with Chamber Business Adviser, Steve Phillips has also given Rachel further insight into new digital tools she can deploy, for example the business wanted to produce a digital menu in order to be more environmentally focussed (reducing the amount of paper, when the daily menu changed). With help from Steve, the business was able to create a QR code which enables customers to scan the code and be taken straight to the up-to-date menu.

## The Future

Slowly but surely, support from the programme and a focused approach to marketing is helping the business dispel the misconception that The Fruit Basket is an expensive alternative to the supermarkets.

*"The Fruit Basket had a great grasp of using digital media to promote their business. With the specialist help from the project they can now utilise each social channel to its best potential."*

**Steve Phillips, Digital High Street Adviser,  
East Midlands Chamber**

Learn more about The Fruit Basket at:  
[www.thefruitbasketdirect.uk](http://www.thefruitbasketdirect.uk)



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*"Having an expert on hand to audit our social media in such a systematic way, gives us greater confidence in knowing what we should be doing and where we can create best impact. It's really reassuring that I have both Steve and Paul at the end of the phone whenever I need advice."*

**Rachel Hyman, Co-owner**

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## The Key Health Club

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Sector</b>              | Health and leisure   |
| <b>Location</b>            | Keyworth   |
| <b>Number of employees</b> | 2  |
| <b>Support received</b>    | Business Adviser support, webinars and one-to-one social media consultancy support |

### Background

The Key Health Club is a small, friendly health club that sits at the heart of Keyworth village. It was bought by husband-and-wife team Phil and Liz Gabriel in 2017. Its facilities include state-of-the-art gym equipment, studio space for yoga, Pilates, indoor cycling and high-intensity training, as well as a pool, sauna and the all-important café.

### Challenges

Covid meant that the business had to shut its doors for nine months. There was a clear hit to revenue at that time but the impact has been for the longer term. People's lives have changed as a result, and membership levels are still 20% down on what they were pre-Covid. The membership challenge has also been heightened with the Club's annual utility bills rising from £19,000 to nearly £60,000.



## Support from the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme

Whilst Phil and his team are clearly expert in running a well-equipped and welcoming health club, they are the first to admit they are something of technophobes. As such, they were keen to tap into any available guidance on this subject.

Logging on to the weekly webinars offered as part of the project has helped ensure the team learn about the very latest trends; particularly as far as the fast-paced area of social media is concerned.

The business has also benefitted from 15 hours of one-to-one support from Paul Ince and his team who were appointed as consultants to the project for their social media expertise. A full audit has identified what is working well and what isn't, and will guide the business on where it should place its efforts over coming months.

## The Future

The goal now is to continue to grow the club's membership in order that this vital resource for the Keyworth community continues for the long term.

*"With competition from large health club chains nearby, the challenge for The Key Health Club was to showcase their facilities to a wider audience. With help from the project, they have identified and implemented new digital strategies, which will help promote the business."*

**Steve Phillips, Digital High Street Adviser,  
East Midlands Chamber**

Learn more about The Key Health Club:  
[www.thekeyhealthclub.co.uk](http://www.thekeyhealthclub.co.uk)

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*"Participating in the Rushcliffe Digital High Street project has given us such insight into so many areas where we had so little prior knowledge. It's really exciting to consider what we're now able to do with this knowledge, and how, as a result, we will attract a whole new cohort of members."*

**Andrea Watts, Marketing Manager**

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## The Style Room

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|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Sector</b>              | Clothing and accessories retail   |
| <b>Location</b>            | Bingham   |
| <b>Number of employees</b> | 2   |
| <b>Support received</b>    | Business Adviser support, webinars and one-to-one website consultancy support |

### Background

The Style Room is a ladies clothing and accessories shop based on the Market Place in Bingham. It was set up in November 2019 and is well-known in the local area for its friendly service and regular Fizz & Fashion events held in Gilt Café Bar, a fellow independent high street business.

### Challenges

With a clear flair for choosing clothing and accessories that are both elegant and practical, owner Kate Stephenson has created a loyal following of local customers.

Small business owners juggle lots of plates – at any one time, Kate can be sales assistant, marketer and cleaner. Inevitably, there will be gaps in knowledge when it comes to some areas of running a business. In Kate's case, it proved to be the technical side of the business's website and social media channels.



## Support from the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme

The business was introduced to the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme when Chamber business adviser, Steve Phillips paid a call. From his visits alone, the business has gained invaluable tips and tricks – and all geared to the challenges it particularly faces.

The support did not, however, start and end with Steve.

Logging on to the project's programme of 12-week webinars has offered vital learning, in particular on how to build a brand online.

With Steve's encouragement and with insight from the webinars, confidence has grown for both Kate and her sales assistant, Ellie. So much so that they are now fully committed to delivering a weekly Facebook and Instagram live.

Digital photography skills too have been honed, with advice from Steve on which apps to use to ensure each week's new arrivals are promoted in the most visually engaging and professional way.

The training led on to one-to-one consultancy support from Chamber-appointed digital consultant, Ian Lockwood. Ian has undertaken a full audit of the business's website from its content to SEO performance, presenting his findings as a helpful and easy-to-digest list of action points.

## The Future

Such a rounded package of support is helping to put the business firmly on the map.

*"Through the project, owner Kate has learned new skills which will enable The Style Room to maximise its engagement with both existing and new customers, particularly through its ever-growing Facebook and Insta community."*

**Steve Phillips, Digital High Street Adviser,  
East Midlands Chamber**

Learn more about The Style Room at:  
[www.style-room.co.uk](http://www.style-room.co.uk)

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*"The support we've received through the project really has been second to none. We refer to our Chamber adviser, Steve Phillips as 'Social Steve' as we're always picking his brains on what more we can do with Facebook and Insta!"*

**Kate Stephenson, Owner**

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## Aslockton Forge

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Sector</b>              | Manufacture and retail of iron-worked gifts |
| <b>Location</b>            | Aslockton                                   |
| <b>Number of employees</b> | 2   |
| <b>Support received</b>    | Business Adviser support and webinars       |

### Background

With a 20-foot farrier cairn (horseshoe pile) on proud display at Aslockton Forge, there is no questioning the strong heritage of this enduring enterprise. Owner David Gill started as a 'Saturday boy' in 1970, becoming an apprentice farrier in 1971 and then self-employed in 1977. He is also a published author on equine hoof balance.

Recognising the popularity of gifts crafted with care, the business diversified in 2014 to produce birthday, wedding and memorial gifts using materials such as iron, steel and copper.

### Challenges

Diversification is the most high-risk of all marketing strategies. As such, it needs a huge amount of effort to reach a new audience.

As an individual most interested in the creative (less so, the commercial) side of his business, David needed help increasing his sales – through his website and the Etsy platform as well as in-person sales at the forge and at Papplewick Pumping Station.

## Support from the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme

The Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme has enabled David to tap into the advice and training he needs to help maximise his sales opportunities.

Firstly, by attending the programme's webinars on social media.

Secondly, through one-to-one sessions with East Midlands Chamber business adviser, Steve Phillips. The benefit of bespoke Adviser support is, of course, being able to tailor it to those challenges foremost in the client's mind. For David, this has included enlisting Steve's help with preparing customs paperwork to sell to the German market. Time spent with Steve has also led to introductions to the wider local business community such as the Chamber's East Midlands Manufacturing Network which will help David engage with other producers in the local area.

Like most creative minds, David is an avid learner who is looking forward to taking full advantage of the benefits afforded to him through the programme's one-year complimentary membership of the Chamber – not least, the opportunity to tap into HR and health & safety support.

## The Future

David's long-term ambition is to grow the forge into a community hub where local people can attend to try their hand at ironworking, and reap the benefits that creative activity brings to both physical and mental wellbeing.

*"David has embraced the digital world of e-commerce for his very traditional rural business. With knowledge gained from attending both the webinars and support from the project, he has seen an increase in sales and has started to export into European markets."*

**Steve Phillips, Digital High Street Adviser,  
East Midlands Chamber**

Learn more about Aslockton Forge at:  
[www.aslocktonforge.com](http://www.aslocktonforge.com)

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*"As a self-employed person, there is so much you need to know about – and you simply aren't able to do it alone. Steve and fellow Chamber business adviser, Insan Farooqi are always on the end of the phone to help me out. Their support really has been invaluable."*

**David Gill, Owner**

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## Just Journey

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Sector</b>              | Independent travel agents                          |
| <b>Location</b>            | West Bridgford                                     |
| <b>Number of employees</b> | 2  |
| <b>Support received</b>    | One-to-one digital advertising consultancy support |

### Background

Just Journey is an independent travel agency specialising in bespoke, multi-centre holidays, ranging from epic cruises and touring adventures to train journeys and self-drive holidays.

The business was established in 2016 by friends Leo Ford and Alistair Bell, who have a collective twenty years of experience in tailor-made travel.

### Challenges

Like all others in the travel industry, the business faced seismic issues during and after Covid; from the initial ban on travel through to passenger hesitancy in booking foreign travel. Confusion around the varying requirements and regulations for different countries also impacted sales.

Added to that, the demographic for the agency has, until now, largely been retirees and honeymooners in the West Bridgford area. In order to fulfil the agency's ambitions for significant growth, it identified that it needed to appeal to a much wider demographic.

*“Our participation in the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme is really helping to bolster our learning and is offering up fresh ideas on how we can expand our clientele. Our next step is to take full advantage of the one-year Chamber membership offered to us as part of the programme, whether that be through networking opportunities, training or by tapping into the Chamber’s HR, marketing and finance helplines.”*

**Leo Ford, Co-owner**

## Support from the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme

A key benefit of the Rushcliffe Digital High Street Programme is the offer of fully-subsidised 15 hours of one-to-one consultancy support. Liam Lally, one of the digital consultants appointed by East Midlands Chamber to support the project, has been tasked with producing a paid digital advertising strategy for the agency.

As participants in the project, the agency also has access to a series of weekly webinars on subjects ranging from attracting new customers to social media messaging. If schedules do not allow for Leo and Alistair to join the streaming in real time, they are able to listen at a later date and at their own pace.

## The Future

The business offers a very inviting meeting room for local people to pore over travel magazines and books, but Leo and Alistair are equally as adept at building customer journeys over the telephone or as virtual meetings. The results are the same: adventures that create life-affirming, everlasting memories.

It is expected that the new digital advertising strategy will give the business the perfect launchpad to attract a wider range of clients, both in terms of demographic and location.

*"Having established themselves locally in West Bridgford, Just Journey would like to expand their client base. The one-to-one support from the project has enabled them to produce a digital strategy that will be used to maximise their investment in paid digital advertising."*

**Steve Phillips, Digital High Street Adviser,  
East Midlands Chamber**

Learn more about Just Journey at:

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





## Council support for local businesses

The Council took the view that we really needed to do everything we could do to support our local businesses, particularly coming out of the pandemic and into what are difficult economic times for many.

We have taken advantage of our allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding, which is part of the Government's Levelling up agenda, to develop a programme of support to increase digital literacy amongst the high street business community. Through the Council's ongoing engagement and work with our businesses, it was clear that digital marketing, search engine optimisation, using and managing websites, and increasing audience reach and customers were all key priorities for the majority of local businesses.

Many of those who have participated in the programme are already reaping tangible business benefits. We will work hard to continue to support our local businesses to identify and meet their needs going forward.

### Councillor Abby Brennan

**Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Business & Growth**  
Rushcliffe Borough Council







**East Midlands Chamber**  
(Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire)

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[www.emc-dnl.co.uk](http://www.emc-dnl.co.uk)

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