

REVIEW

THE

/22

bruntwood



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A Year of Togetherness

- Introduction by Chris Oglesby

What a year!

We began 2022 with real momentum post-Covid. We saw our cities coming back to life, with people relishing opportunities to go out and enjoy themselves, do business together and collaborate on new projects. There was such a real sense of positive momentum and energy.

Then of course we had Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with its human and economic costs, seemingly coming from nowhere.

Everyone has played a part in the response. Just one example is our People team, who have joined other North West businesses and the Growth Company to develop United for Ukraine, supporting over 1200 people so far and finding more than 100 jobs for Ukrainian nationals in the North. This is an incredible platform that we will continue to grow to support other people in need.

What we need most to help navigate through global shocks is stable national politics. After the turmoil of the early autumn, I am relieved to find we are in less choppy waters. We know there are difficult times ahead, but having as much certainty and predictability as possible is important for every business to thrive.

Throughout everything, we have done what we do best and continued to focus on our enduring purpose - investing in the future of our towns and cities.

We know innovation, science and technology must be the basis of our future economy, especially that of our regional cities. Already we see the businesses of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) flourishing in our cities: cutting edge science and tech businesses; those disrupting their sectors through application of science and tech; and those supporting these businesses.

This is about more than just individual businesses adopting innovative new technologies or approaches. For cities to really flourish, we need to create a whole ecosystem to rewire our places so that they encourage more R&D, and more adoption of this R&D right across our conurbations, increasing the number of high quality jobs, improving our skills and growing our networks of businesses.

Along with private sector colleagues from our leading sectors, I have been chairing a new group (Innovation GM) to do exactly this. Along with our universities and local authorities, we made the case for devolving more responsibility for funding innovation and R&D. February's Levelling Up White Paper agreed with that approach and we have been working on developing Innovation Accelerators in Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Glasgow as the first step towards this. I am hugely positive about the fact that the transfer of powers from central Government towards more local decision making, is back on the political agenda.

Across our portfolio, Bruntwood SciTech, our 50/50 joint venture with Legal & General continues to go from strength to strength, reflecting this growth in innovative and progressive businesses.

This past year, we have brought forward development with new life science facilities at Alderley Park and Birmingham Health Innovation Campus (BHIC), with CityLabs 4.0 to follow as the next phase of Manchester Science Park, promising the provision of a major life sciences research anchor in the North.

Within our focus on Industry 4.0, we saw the completion of BASE at MSP, and the topping out of Enterprise Wharf at Innovation Birmingham. Coupled with that, we also reached full occupancy at Circle Square — a milestone which lays the groundwork for the next phase of the Oxford Road Corridor innovation district, and the emergence of our most ambitious venture to date: ID Manchester.

Our expansion into new towns and cities has also been a huge leap forward. Venturing into Scotland, with the acquisition of Glasgow's Met Tower, has transformed the horizon for the Bruntwood SciTech brand and I'm excited to see the building develop into a world-leading centre for innovation through our £60m commitment to the site. Creating a hub at Melbourn in Cambridge will complement this advancement, helping to connect businesses across the rest of our UK network with arguably one of the most dynamic tech and life science centres in the world.

In Bruntwood Works we continue to invest in our commercial business districts with our brilliantly successful Pioneer buildings; new this year have been The Plaza in Liverpool and the completion of a fantastic new rooftop bar and restaurant Climat at Blackfriars, Manchester. Castle House has added to our Leeds offer, enabling the creation of a tech cluster in West Village, at one end of Leeds' emerging Innovation Arc.

Most pleasing though is how businesses are coming together. Whether it's by growing new ventures and connections through the Spark programme, or the business community showing its trademark resilience and solidarity through support for wider adoption of the Real Living Wage and generously contributing to our annual Wishing Tree campaign, it's that togetherness that makes our regional cities great, and continues to inspire me. The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham perfectly captured this wider sense of delight from people coming together to celebrate this community spirit and all that their cities have to offer.

But our city centres are not everything; they never have been. Creating successful regional cities means supporting the success of the towns around them too. 2022 was filled with exciting new announcements about our town centres: our new joint venture with Bury Council to regenerate The Millgate shopping centre; confirmation of plans for the future of Altrincham, including the introduction of Foundation; and the unveiling of our ambitions for the rebirth of the high street in Stretford with the redevelopment of Stretford Mall.

Aligned with our broadened focus beyond the city centres is our nascent venture strategy, which has so far seen us invest in UA92, Northern Gritstone and a number of tech and life science businesses, in support of the wider ecosystem in and around our regional cities.

In reality, this is an extension of the philosophy that has always existed at Bruntwood: to think beyond bricks and mortar, supporting business and community in a more rounded, long-term way. The support we offer through Northern

Gritstone, as well as the Greater Manchester and Cheshire Life Sciences Fund by Praetura, is not limited to businesses in our portfolio but rather geared towards organisations that are aligned to create a healthy local economy.

Whether acting to address climate change, reduce educational, health or skills inequalities, or adding to our cities' cultural vibrancy, the organisations we seek to support all make a contribution to creating thriving cities. And as well as our business contribution, we support the same priorities philanthropically through the Oglesby Charitable Trust.

We know how tough times are for businesses, the people who work for us and for our wider communities. As businesses the best thing we can do is to keep going. To continue to provide good quality, secure work that supports people's development and pays fairly. Bruntwood will carry on with its successful Graduate and Apprenticeship schemes, which saw brand new cohorts in 2022, offering innovative in-work training and opportunities to the next generation of talent in our industry.

The wellbeing of our people should be front and centre of all our thoughts and drive our actions. It is in large part why, like our partners at L&G, we are promoting the expansion of the growing ESG agenda to cover health and wellbeing explicitly. In the last 12 months, we've launched our new Cycle-to-Work Scheme, pension support for financial wellbeing and a range of 'Lunch and Learn' sessions to advise colleagues on how to make the most of the benefits available to them — that's to name just a few.

We start 2023 with the same sense of excitement with which we entered 2022. We're not complacent about the scale of the external challenges, but are confident that our proposition is well-positioned to address many of these challenges and is focused on those areas of the economy that will continue to grow.

At the heart of our success, as always, will be our fantastic Bruntwood colleagues and partners. They can all be incredibly proud of what we've achieved together in this turbulent year in delivering on our purpose of Creating Thriving Cities.

“For cities to really flourish, we need to create a whole ecosystem to rewire our places so that they encourage more R&D, and more adoption of this R&D right across our conurbations, increasing the number of high quality jobs, improving our skills and growing our networks of businesses.”

– Chris Oglesby, Chief Executive Officer

Customers at the heart of everything

Our award winning customer-centric culture

+30

Our group Net Promoter Score of +30 is considered excellent*

91%

Engagement score across our Community & Event

We've always had a customer-centric culture at Bruntwood, and that's why we've continued to invest and develop our Voice of Customer programme across our full portfolio. Using industry standard metrics, the programme allows us to benchmark our customer experience versus the wider industry.

As a result, we've been able to create insights on an individual customer level, and also to view those insights on a multi-dimensional level, segmenting by building, region or audience type to really shape our understanding of our customer and their experience.

Our group Net Promoter Score of **+30** is considered excellent when benchmarked against like-for-like B2B brands, and this has been reflected across the whole customer journey, with a particular improvement on customers'

sentiment towards our level of service compared with previous years. Alongside this, we have noted the value customers place on the full proposition of amenity, community, operational excellence and customer experience that's available in our evolved buildings. This is now the blueprint for what excellent service delivery looks like at Bruntwood.

We're also pleased to have delivered a **91%** engagement score across our Community & Events programme this year, with an uplift across our full purpose driven programmes including wellbeing, social impact, partnership activations and social networking. This is a core part of our offer as our customers' ability to connect with like-minded businesses, and access events and networking opportunities, is central to their engagement with their office environment.

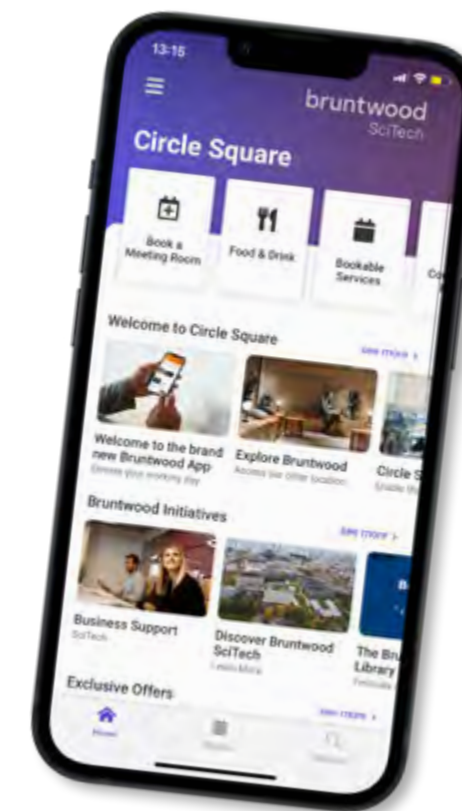


Digital first

Customer digitisation projects

Over the past 12 months, we've also been on a journey to develop a new customer and colleague app, promoting our 'digital first' mindset and offering a seamless experience for our customers to engage with our teams, building facilities, local partners and amenities. Developed in partnership with HqO, the app allows our customers to engage with us via their mobile devices, as well as offering human interaction from our on-site teams when they need it.

Following a successful two-stage launch (in July and October 2022 respectively) we're not stopping there. Next up is an evolved booking experience for meeting rooms across our buildings, encompassing the capability to book any kind of flexible space, including a 'pay-as-you-go' desk or membership to any of our coworking lounges. So far, we've had lots of positive in-app feedback!



“Very straightforward to use, lovely perks and things to win. Didn't know that so much was going on so it opened my social diary too”



“The events and discounts being offered are so good and the opportunities to win competitions are really fun! It's user friendly and incredibly easy to find what you want”



Going for Gold

In October the Customer Experience Awards were held in Wembley and for the first time in Bruntwood's history we submitted two entries into the following categories; 'Customers at the Heart of Everything' and 'Best use of customer insights'. After being shortlisted and invited to present our submissions to a panel of esteemed judges we were thrilled to be Gold winners of both categories!

To top the night off, Bruntwood also won the 'Winner of Winners Award', delivered to the top scoring entry across all 30 categories. We were thrilled to be recognised for all the work we do as a business to embed our customer service mission throughout our teams and the way we utilise insight from our audiences to continually evolve and improve our offering.

Creating a culture of belonging

Our colleague culture is one of the things which sets Bruntwood apart.

Workplace cultures can be affected by a whole range of factors, and so we recognise that nurturing our culture is an ongoing journey.

In 2022 there has been a number of milestones on that journey, including the launch of a new Transgender Policy following guidance from our LGBTQIA+ Network, and receiving 'Good Practice' accreditation with Manchester Pride's 'All Equals Charter'. To explore what

goes into creating a thriving colleague culture and how that intersects with our purpose, we asked People Director Jen Atkins and Social Impact Project Manager Emily Mathew to share their insights on the Diversity & Inclusion agenda at Bruntwood. We also heard from representatives from our colleague networks, who shared their thoughts on Bruntwood's culture of belonging.

Pictured: Emiy Mathew,
Social Impact Project Manager



– Emily Mathew

When we talk about creating thriving cities, it's about more than the buildings; it's also about what we're enabling people to do in our buildings and within our cities. Inclusivity is a huge part of that. Being a truly inclusive employer is about embracing individualism, yet allowing that individualism to come together as a whole.

One way we've tried to do that is by establishing our D&I Allyship Programme. The Allies have helped us to understand the day-to-day experience within Bruntwood across a broader range of perspectives. To give those perspectives more of a platform, we've also created the D&I Forum, where the Allies can get in front of Board members to make recommendations and create tangible actions for the business.

We've also produced a series of colleague networks for various issues and themes (including our LGBTQIA+ Network and our Wellbeing Champions), and tried to provide as much space as possible for those networks to come together organically. Following recommendations from our LGBTQIA+ Network, we've now introduced a new Transgender Policy which includes 20 days' affirmation leave for anyone transitioning, which we felt was an important way to support our colleagues, but is still relatively rare for employers to offer in the UK.

We do get things wrong sometimes, and we admit that. For instance, we recently had a candidate let us know we could have better accommodated their needs during the recruitment process, and that's something we're working hard to address, including rolling out a programme of disability awareness training. But that work is helped immeasurably by letting our colleagues guide us. We look to our colleagues as the voices of authority on the issues that affect them. This also raises awareness within the wider business, so it has a powerful ripple effect.

One highlight for me this year was the All Equals Charter accreditation. Not just for the accreditation itself; but because so many people came forward during the process and said that Bruntwood is the most inclusive place they'd ever worked. Plus, the Charter provides us with rich insights into where we can go next, and the potential for what we can do at Bruntwood is really exciting.

– Jen Atkins

What do we mean by culture? Our culture is created and lived through our colleagues in their words, behaviours and actions everyday. It's 'how we do things round here'. Our longstanding values of belonging and inclusion have always underpinned our efforts to be more diverse. But this doesn't mean we sit still. We're always moving – looking for even better ways to deliver an extraordinary colleague experience.

To do that, we prioritise truly listening to our colleagues. Aside from organisational priorities, the People team's agenda is driven largely by what our colleagues are telling us. We use a variety of means to seek that feedback: our annual Colleague Engagement Survey; regular listening groups; insight from conversations our People Partners are having on the ground; smaller Pulse surveys throughout the year; and a range of colleague networks (including our D&I Allies, Wellbeing Champions and LGBTQIA+ Network).

Ensuring that colleague feedback leads to positive action is also key. This year, thanks to colleague feedback, we introduced a renewed focus on career development. Our Careers Fest in August came out of colleagues expressing an increased desire for progression, and spotlighted internal opportunities, colleague stories, training and coaching sessions across a whole variety of professional skill sets.

Creating thriving cities means creating places where people can thrive and, for me, that feeds our culture of belonging and our aim to be a truly inclusive employer. For colleagues to feel like they belong, they have to feel included, heard and valued by the business when it makes decisions. That's why we have a diverse range of voices feeding into our strategy, aided by a broad set of channels for colleague engagement and collaboration. This helps us to understand the needs and aspirations of every individual within our business and avoid a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

We still have some way to go, but when I look at where we were five years ago, I can see that we have a far more diverse workforce as a result of our inclusive culture, and I believe we will continue to strengthen this over the next 5 years. I really feel that we're on a positive trajectory.

What our colleagues said...

"We're proud to be at the start of a culture shift that feels very progressive. In the near future, we aim for everyone at Bruntwood to feel valued and heard, despite their differences"

Rachel Anderson and Valentina Othieno, D&I Allies

"The culture at Bruntwood is people-focused; colleagues are helpful, supportive and spend time developing meaningful relationships"

Yasmin Hasoon, D&I Ally

"My experience of the culture and Bruntwood has been one where I feel safe to engage in discussion, to learn from my peers and feel empowered to respectfully educate colleagues where I feel it is appropriate"

Lauren Edwards, LGBTQIA+ Network Member



The virtuous circle of culture

– Kate Vokes, Non-Executive Director at Bruntwood

As Non-Executive Director at Bruntwood, Chair of Trustees at the Oglesby Charitable Trust, and a board member at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Kate Vokes is well-placed to understand the relationship between the commercial and cultural life of our cities. Here, she explains the role of community in that dynamic and how Bruntwood works to maximise all three elements in its formula for thriving cities.

At Bruntwood, we talk a lot about creating thriving cities. It's the purpose that drives everything we do. But cities are not just buildings; they're people, so the fundamental point of what makes our cities great places to live and work is the sense of community and belonging that can be found there.

That sense of community is often forged by culture and all its aspects. There's so much evidence that art enriches life and brings people together. The vast majority of people who identify a particular city as home actually have a lineage that originates elsewhere, and the cosmopolitan centres in which Bruntwood operates are proud to include communities from across the country and around the world. How has that happened? Well, the demographic blend in any city owes a lot to a complex mix of variables, but in a recent survey by Arts Council England, 68% of people felt that arts and culture were a factor in where they chose to live as it helped to foster community feeling.

This isn't wholly surprising – engaging with culture is fun, joyous, life-affirming. Gigs, festivals and nights at the theatre have the extremes of human emotion on display and they bring people together in shared experiences. In coming together, people form relationships and relationships are what spark innovation. So culture is also vital for catalysing growth in our cities.

We're aiming to strike the same chord with our customers, too. We aim to build community within our spaces, so that our customers enjoy coming into them, and do their best work while they're there. One of the main attractors is the cultural offering. Whether it's live music on the roof garden at Cotton Exchange in Liverpool, or a dance performance in the auditorium at Bloc in Manchester, the vibrant experience of culture available within our buildings drives conversations and builds connection.



The Bruntwood Prize winner 2022



But there's a wider story too, and the relationship between culture and community is somewhat circular. A sense of community can only be nurtured through culture if the cultural scene is reflective of, and offers a platform for, a diverse range of voices. In that sense, culture relies on community, as much as it creates it. For us, this can be seen through our partnerships with cultural organisations like HOME, The Royal Exchange Theatre and Grand Union's 'Artists-in-Residence' programme in Birmingham. The artistic output of these organisations is enhanced by their eclecticism and consequent appeal to a broad range of audiences.

Plus, all of these organisations work hard to engage with people from the local area and this too is a key aspect of creating community. The 'Artists-in-Residence' scheme is specifically aimed at Birmingham artists; Homeground (a temporary space which opened next to HOME in the summer of 2021) showcased the talent of local young people from HideOut Youth Zone; and the Den (part of The Royal Exchange's 'Local Exchange' programme) takes theatre into the communities around Greater Manchester in a series of three-year residencies, building close relationships with housing associations, libraries, foodbanks and arts organisations to create meaningful activity in each area. Of course, a countless number of cultural organisations take a similar approach, including those we partner with, and those we do not. But the point is clear: for culture to mean anything, it has to welcome the people around it and find different ways to engage with them. That's where a feeling of community is really built.

If a community feels truly engaged with its local theatre, art gallery, library or music venue, then the people there care about that place and want to support it. Residents and businesses become more likely to interact with that institution and over time, a sense of shared ownership is developed, where cultural institutions are maintained and supported by a mix of businesses, volunteers, partners and philanthropic contributions. This wider dynamic brings us to the second sense in which culture relies on community.

Quite often, the Arts depend in large part on government support to survive. Yet public funds have a tendency to be scarce and the Arts can be one of the first sectors to see major cuts in times of crisis. That's why we believe in meaningful, innovative, long-term partnerships between the corporate sector and the Arts, to support the public funding – especially in cases where there is less public funding to go around.

By being developed over the long-term, these partnerships go way beyond monetary contributions, and allow a sense of trust and community to be built between cultural organisations and the businesses which support them. This is vital for free expression and allows the artistic and corporate sectors to collaborate in creative ways, whether by sharing industry expertise or growing their mutual networks and making valuable connections.

The partnerships mentioned above, plus other examples like SICK! Festival in Moston and Harpurhey, Homotopia in Liverpool and Leeds International Festival of Ideas, allow the artistic endeavours in our cities to produce innovative work which attracts and represents a diverse audience.

Only through such work can culture foster a true sense of community, by bringing people together to witness thought-provoking art which stimulates debate, engenders innovation and gives rise to societal change. Ultimately then, it's the relationship between culture and community, with the two forming a virtuous circle, which allows one to complement and enhance the other – and that's the blend we seek to nurture in our thriving cities.

Kate Vokes, Non-Executive Director, Bruntwood



Ambition for real change

Alex Edwards was appointed as Bruntwood's Sustainability Director in 2022. Here, he outlines the key areas of his vision for our ambitious plans to create thriving cities through real change to the fundamental way we do business. In an industry where sustainable practices are a significant challenge, Alex stresses the importance of a clear and structured plan, as well as spotlighting a leading example of our creative approach to sustainability.

Humans have a huge impact on the planet. As a business, we have a moral duty to make sure we're constructing, maintaining and operating our business sustainably. It's an enormous challenge but we've seen that the desire from our colleagues, customers and communities to engage with sustainability has increased dramatically in the last 12 months – it's now a top priority.

That gives us a fantastic opportunity to make change happen right now. In 2022, we worked hard to develop our ambitious sustainability strategy, ensuring it is integrated across the business. We're confident it will drive Bruntwood's vision of creating sustainable cities for the future, by covering seven key areas: energy; emissions; green spaces & biodiversity; sustainable materials; sustainable transport; waste; water.

These seven areas provide a structure to help our customers reach their sustainability goals. They also allow us to work with suppliers in developing a more eco-friendly supply chain, and collaborate across our regions to create a more secure future.

A clear route

To drive our ambition to become industry leaders in sustainability, we've launched our Net Zero Pathway outlining our essential improvements between now and 2050 to reach our short, medium and long term sustainability goals.

From now on, we'll balance the amount of carbon emissions from new developments by the amount we remove from the atmosphere, therefore reaching net zero carbon.

We'll achieve that in a number of ways, such as designing sustainably using best practice frameworks like NABERS Design for Performance, avoiding fossil fuels to provide heating and hot water to new developments, and completing assessments that minimise our carbon impact.

In the areas under our direct control, we'll operate those new buildings at net zero carbon, too – supporting our efforts to have a positive impact on the environment.





The secret life of plants

You've read the strategy, but what are the everyday things that can be done to make us more sustainable?

There's a lot to consider, but Alex spotlights the example of biophilic design, which has impact beyond its ecological benefits.

Biophilia - or 'the love of living things' - is one of the core elements of our Pioneer developments. This fantastic foliage is provided by our partners, *I Want Plants* - the UK's leading independent supplier of horticultural and biophilic displays. They have teamed up with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to test their HYVERT system across eight sustainability-related elements - using Bruntwood spaces as their test bed! The results are exciting...

Internal walls

Reducing noise levels

Many studies show how exposure to chronic noise pollution can negatively affect human health and cognitive ability. Although within acceptable sound limits of 60-70 decibels, human speech is found to be the most distracting as it forces your subconscious mind to focus on it. A building's architecture, interior layout and materials significantly affect its acoustic performance. During the study, the project team measured how different plants on the HYVERT system can be used to absorb specific sounds and that by installing an internal living wall, sound levels can be reduced by 9.25 decibels - the equivalent of switching off a blender in a silent office.

Interestingly, certain combinations of plants were found to reduce low frequency sounds like the rumbling of vehicle traffic and construction work, whereas other combinations can be used to dampen medium and high frequencies that cover the whole range of human speech.

Capturing pollution indoors

At Bruntwood's Union building, the team used a combination of our air quality monitoring systems and *I Want Plants*' forensics lab to monitor how their HYVERT living walls can capture harmful pollutants that are found inside buildings.

The experiment proved that the HYVERT system was able to capture harmful microscopic pollutants that even high performance ventilation filters will miss, all while using a fraction of the energy.

Exterior walls

Absorbing outdoor pollutants

In 2022 Bruntwood's Bloc and Foundation became temporary research sites. There, *I Want Plants* and MMU have developed innovative and low cost methods of accurately recording air pollution and have evidenced that elements like HYVERT exterior living walls can absorb particulate matter and heavy metals from the air, that may otherwise cause damage to our lungs.

Increasing biodiversity

Biodiversity is such a key area. Using acoustic monitoring, the team were able to identify the different types of insects and birds that like to land on the plants in the HYVERT system through the animals' individual vibrations. *I Want Plants* even has an app that tells the user what types of insects and birds sit on their plants each month, as well as data on the levels of air pollutants and water recirculation.

Creating cleaner water

At West Village, one of our Pioneer developments in Leeds, we're working with *I Want Plants* to take the water from the roof, as well as our heating, ventilation and cooling systems, and recirculating it through a large HYVERT living wall. The research team at MMU has proven that, after filtering water through the HYVERT living wall, the water quality actually exceeds the standards used by the water industry in the UK - making it clean and ready to use throughout the West Village scheme.

Improving energy performance

The thermal insulation benefits of the HYVERT living wall are similar to adding an additional masonry cavity wall that's filled with wool insulation. Whilst that helps to reduce energy costs of the building, being able to understand how the plants' characteristics do this will enable future developments to have even better insulation performance.

By implementing a south facing HYVERT wall at a test site, the research team found that it improved the energy performance of the test building by 39% and that the hotter the building became, the better the roots performed to insulate the building.

A global skills game-changer

Lou Cordwell, Director for ID Manchester, is a natural advocate for strong cross-sector partnerships to deliver transformational change.

ID Manchester (IDM) is positioned to become a world-class innovation platform, driving skills, new ideas and economic growth for Manchester and the UK as a whole.

But how will it work in practice?

Here, Lou explains the project in real terms, including how the current skills agenda has lit the blue touchpaper for IDM to flourish.

The Skills Gap

We're currently in the middle of a perfect storm. We've experienced a longstanding shortage of skills across various fields (tech and digital being amongst the most obvious). These shortages are not peculiar to Manchester or the UK; they are global crises. Then we've had a pandemic, during which certain sectors, which already had skills shortages, have grown at an alarming rate — all of which has exacerbated the situation further still. The simultaneous and accelerated decline of other heritage industries has prompted an overnight need to transfer skills and people, which is presenting new reskilling challenges.

Out of that pandemic, we know that many people have emerged with a totally different set of values. Huge swathes of the working population have decided to step off the hamster wheel and make radical changes to their lifestyles, including their working life. For some, that's meant drastic changes like changing career or even country; for others, simply reducing their working hours so they get to spend more time with their families. All of which has caused additional strain on the skills system.

In the last 12-18 months we've also seen an emerging problem with people in the later stages of their career simply dropping out of the workforce. We're only just starting to understand the reasons behind this phenomenon, but there seem to be a number of contributing factors: physical health, mental health, early retirement, lifestyle shifts. Whatever the reason, it's led to a significant loss of highly experienced and skilled team members.



And then finally, sprinkled on top of all of this, the war for talent is adding to the overall inflation challenge but driving up the people cost for businesses across a whole range of sectors. With the critical foundational economy having also taken a massive workforce hit thanks to Brexit and other drivers, and the pandemic switching people off zero hour jobs, the challenges for employers can feel neverending. People need to know how their employer is going to support their health and wellbeing, their career progression and make the company a purpose-driven, inspiring, inclusive place to work. Business leaders may be exhausted from leading their organisations through Covid, but there's no getting around these questions.

So, given all of the above, plus the wider economic uncertainty, it's no surprise that cities are putting all they can into ensuring they get their skills strategies right.

The Opportunity

If we do get this right, the vision from a skills and capability perspective at IDM is twofold. Having The University of Manchester as a joint venture partner is a massive attractor for business. It's a huge part of the USP of the place and IDM's proposition, because access to talent is high on the agenda for organisations both big and small. Sometimes that's skills talent and sometimes it's excellence in R&D.

Secondly, the IDM joint venture enables the University to develop an even closer and more collaborative relationship with industry. Over time, this will help to give the University an even stronger sense of the future skills need. From day one, we'll be focused on the existing core capabilities of the University and how we build out from those in terms of accelerators, innovation and skills. Gradually, however, we'll also be able to use our industry relationships to identify projected skills and R&D requirements over the next 10-20 year period and work with the University to build out highly desirable capabilities.

One of the exciting things about IDM is that all this can be done at an incredible scale. The size, reputation and credibility of the University, the transport connectivity and the close proximity to other hugely important knowledge institutions, are all significant advantages for us. This scale means that international companies will choose this place to land in the UK and Manchester for the first time, and that large numbers of students from the University will have access to some incredible opportunities to work with those businesses and grow their careers as a result. Obviously that benefits the students, but it also benefits the companies themselves by allowing them access to such amazing talent. Plus, a student population of 100,000 across Manchester's universities presents a huge inward investment hook for the Greater Manchester economy.

One of the key values that will sit at the heart of everything we're doing at IDM is inclusive innovation. It's in an urban setting, neighbouring some of the poorest parts of the city region. For many of the project team, one of the key motivations for being involved in IDM is the opportunity to inspire and enable the 10-year-olds who live in those local areas to become the scientists and innovators of tomorrow. It's a long-term change, not a quick win – but that's its strength. For a child to be able to sit in their bedroom, watching this neighbourhood being built and know that it's for them – that's the inclusive skills agenda we're pursuing.

Of course, for it to work that way, our community engagement has to start early and we're already developing this programme of activity. But this ethos of inclusivity also translates into the masterplan and embeds itself into every element of the project, from branding and proposition, right the way through to landscaping and commercial strategy.



The Future

What we should be seeing in 10 years is a blend of huge, positive, sustainable impact locally, nationally and internationally. Locally, we'll see an impact on our immediate surrounding neighbourhoods. We'll see a vibrant, thriving place which those neighbourhoods have played a part in shaping, and which local people feel very much at home in — working, living and building their businesses there.

Nationally, we'll have an extended community through a place that benefits people and businesses from one of the most well-connected points in the North of England. We should expect to see an environment which welcomes people from Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, etc., and where people want to work, collaborate and participate in events.

Internationally, we have a really significant and powerful brand that rivals the best-in-class global exemplars. Because of that, new business, new money and new opportunities will be drawn into the UK, into the North and into Manchester. Not only that, but it will happen in a way which couldn't have existed without IDM as a unique platform and ecosystem for transformational growth. What will be most powerful will be the existence of a community of innovators, researchers, businesses and collaborators who are there not just because of the scale of opportunity, but because they share the set of values on which IDM is founded. And those values, of sustainable growth, inclusivity and positive social impact will be the difference at IDM.



Impact through innovation

Female founder, entrepreneur and Bruntwood SciTech's Head of Innovation Services in the North - Deb Hetherington has a deep interest in the digital space and a passion for social impact. Here, she explores the concept of innovation, within digital and beyond.

'Innovation' means different things to different people, and rightly so. It has no authoritative definition because it is not one single thing. It's a concept, covering many sub-categories. For me though, innovation is the process of creating value by applying new solutions to meaningful problems. So, there are really three areas of innovation within that definition: creation, process and value. So many of the businesses based on our sites are innovative, in many different ways, and it's that variety and potential I find most exciting.

I'm hugely passionate about the positive impact these innovative businesses can have on the enormous societal issues we face today. Solutions like innovations in radical technology, business model disruption, incremental processes, and everything in between - Bruntwood is perfectly positioned to support and develop this 'impact through innovation', within its ecosystems.

We house the full spectrum of innovation 'ecosystem players' within our campuses, from Universities to funding networks, talent providers to IP specialists. There are times in which Bruntwood itself innovates, and we're good at it, but what our specialist Innovation Services teams do for the businesses based in our buildings is incredibly unique.

Pictured:
Deb Hetherington

Currently, there is an evidenced gap in the entrepreneurial space of female founders, who are underrepresented and under-supported. The Innovation Services team designed an incubator, to include partners across legal, accounting, marketing and funding, as well as mentors and workshops. We launched a competition for free desk space at Platform, our tech incubator in Leeds, and were so overwhelmed with the quality of applications that we increased the number of founders we were supporting to eight. This is a pilot programme, but we aim to gain sustainable further funding, and to deliver across our sites in the North.

The skills agenda is also a topic close to my heart. Our education system here in England is trying to catch up with industry requirements, but it's some way off. Consequently, we have a wide range of alternative skills and talent providers, especially in the technology and digital space. This year we partnered with one such provider, Agent Academy, on a piece of work

titled 'The Future Skills of Circle Square'. We worked with the businesses based in Manchester's Circle Square, gathering data on their talent challenges, and provided them with insight, and a local skills-mapping data bank for future requirement needs. The programme ran for three months, and resulted in a diverse cohort of ten trained graduates, of which half were placed in full-time roles.

Bringing the tech ecosystem together across our cities is a key part of achieving both innovation and impact. This year we launched 'Tech Thursday' at Manchester Technology Centre (which, like Circle Square, sits along the Oxford Road Corridor). The format of the day is a networking lunch, followed by a partner panel, drop-in sessions, hot desking, office yoga, and then networking drinks at HATCH. The aim of the day is to bring together our internal ecosystem across our Manchester sites, to facilitate collaboration and creativity.

Pictured: Female founders and mentors



Initiatives like this, and Bruntwood's wider innovation strategy is largely guided by our partners. We develop innovation spaces in partnership with Universities, the NHS and the cities in which we operate, aligned to the multiple ambitions of the stakeholders within those cities. The University of Manchester has a globally recognised specialism within biosciences, and this will lead a lot of the development of 'Innovation Space' within ID Manchester for example. Our impact and subsequent commercial success would be far less if we developed in silo. Collaborating with key strategic partners is a crucial part of our innovation strategy, and why we are so successful at what we do.

What we're essentially doing is taking the building blocks of the ecosystem, and designing activity that supports business growth and social impact. Whether it's introductions, accessing markets, skills or funding, we ensure our businesses can get to all of these elements. Our tangible and impactful partnerships wrap around all of the activity we design, from events, to incubators, accelerators and business diagnostics.

Bruntwood SciTech can't create a thriving innovation district alone – and nor should we. We galvanise activity for the economic and social growth of the regions in which we operate, and it's really something special to be a part of.

“Collaborating with key strategic partners is a crucial part of our innovation strategy, and why we are so successful at what we do”



INTERVIEW

Rob Valentine

Director for Leeds and Birmingham

We caught up with Rob about the remarkable development and growth of the West Midlands that's been happening in recent years, and what we can expect to see from the region in the future.

Tell us the story of Bruntwood in Birmingham

Over the last 25 years Bruntwood has had a limited but growing presence in Birmingham. Cornwall Buildings was our first acquisition, which was acquired in isolation as a serviced office. An initial view at the time was that the purchase was going to be a strategic play in the region but nothing followed immediately afterwards. That all started to change around 2006-7 as it was recognised that Birmingham presented an exciting opportunity for Bruntwood to grow as a second city region outside of our Manchester headquarters.

What was your initial role in Birmingham?

I was asked to go down to the West Midlands to look at the McLaren building and cut the cost plan back. My specific remit was to let the building as quickly as possible against a difficult economic background for the country. What followed next was the acquisition of Centre City, and then Cornerblock, a building which had been vacant for roughly 10 years.

Long term aspirations for Birmingham started to develop when we recognised a growing opportunity within the innovation offer for the

city, with Bruntwood SciTech first venturing into Innovation Birmingham in 2018. Today, Bruntwood has expanded further under the SciTech portfolio with the development of Enterprise Wharf which is, located in the fledgling knowledge quarter area which sits alongside Aston University and BCU. A huge strategic step forward, the expansion of the Innovation Birmingham campus and the developing Knowledge Quarter opens up new opportunity to work alongside partners to envisage and deliver a world class innovation district, and realise masses of potential growth for the whole city region.

In addition to our work in the Knowledge Quarter, over on the other side of the city, we are developing Birmingham Health Innovation Campus (BHIC), which topped out recently and will complete in October 2023, will enable us to develop the first Life Sciences innovation campus in the region, partnering with University of Birmingham, Birmingham Health Partners and other health partners across the West Midlands.



What's changed in Birmingham from when Bruntwood first arrived in the city to now?

You can see the transformation in a number of areas; be that the quality of the commercial office provision, the extent of the public realm development, or the volume of bars and restaurants that have opened, benefiting inward investors and attracting new businesses which now call Birmingham home. It now feels like a true European city which has really prospered as part of its phenomenal efforts to deliver a truly successful Commonwealth Games.

Bruntwood sponsored the Games in Manchester in 2002; how did that inform our approach to Birmingham 2022?

Knowing what Manchester 2002 did for our profile at the time, including partnerships and new opportunities across the city, was really incredible.

We were able to emulate much of that success in Birmingham. We knew it would be vital in demonstrating our commitment to the city



What do you think of the strategy for developing the West Midlands?

I believe there is so much opportunity, particularly in the innovation sector. There is a breadth and depth of innovation across all West Midlands regions; everywhere you look it's happening. From life sciences to digital tech innovation, world leading engineering to gaming, all underpinned by some world class universities in Birmingham plus Warwick University, and complemented by some smaller specialist universities including Aston which has an engineering focus, and Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies. It's the youngest city in Europe with a diverse talent pool and thinking, but also a region which is very comfortable with itself, has a very stable population and is fully aware of both its challenges and its opportunities.



and the wider region, strengthening existing relationships and opening up new opportunities for us. Simultaneously, we are involved in the West Midlands Growth Company Business & Tourism programme which has proven to be very successful, already attracting 15 new businesses into our Innovation Birmingham campus off the back of our involvement, and we're only half way through.

Fundamentally it was a lot of fun and we were privileged to be able to enjoy the experience of the Games with our colleagues, customers and stakeholders.

Did anything surprise you about the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games?

The Games massively outperformed my expectations. The palpable excitement, the smiles on peoples' faces and the way the world was viewing Birmingham — the Games were an immense success and it's great reflecting on the part we played in that. Now it's about building on the legacy after the Games and working with the team on how we deliver that. Having just returned from India in November on a trade mission, led by Andy Street as part of the Global Growth Programme, it's now about leveraging that further into the future.



Creating vibrant, flourishing places

Our vision to create vibrant, flourishing places has always been at the heart of our strategy and is now what drives us as we become increasingly embedded not just in our cities, but in the towns and communities that surround them. 2022 has seen us accelerate our activity with the ambitious transformation of Stretford, Altrincham and, most recently, Bury.

Behind this renewed focus on town centres is the recognition that towns and cities are intimately connected, and that we need to help create an economy in which both can thrive. To do this, we believe in building strong and lasting partnerships, both with businesses and with the public sector. We've learned a lot about collaboration from our 46-year history of partnering with councils, universities, health services, industry and the third sector. Together with an approach that prioritises long-term investment in place, commercial creativity and strong leadership, it has allowed us to create thriving places that enhance their existing communities and attract new ones.

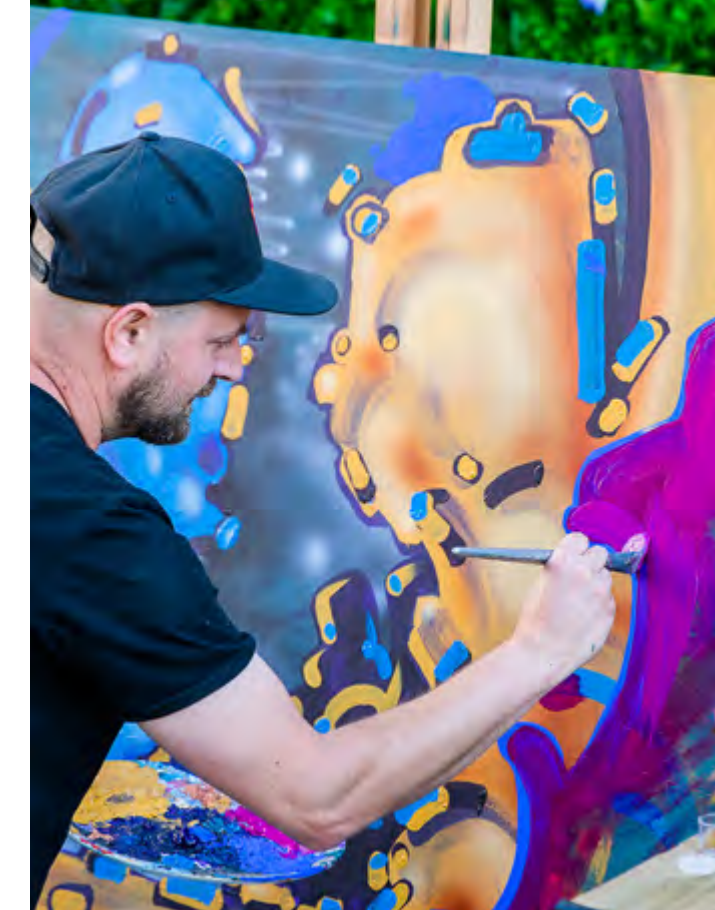
That's why the basis for each of our three active town centre regeneration projects is a strong joint venture partnership: with Trafford Council at Stretford Mall and Altrincham's Stamford Quarter, and with Bury Council at Mill Gate Shopping Centre in Bury.

Civic Pride

Fostering and harnessing civic pride is hugely important. People should be proud of their town centres and want to be there to work, eat, shop and socialise. In turn, this has a ripple effect, drawing in businesses, retailers and consumers — a virtuous circle which enhances the hyperlocal economy.

Setting up a town centre advisory board allows us to connect the right people and allow stakeholders at all levels to meet and collaborate, with all parties fully invested in a set of shared goals.

That way, the regeneration process can be a cycle of developing the vision with architects, feeding back to stakeholders, and delivering a refined and repositioned offering which benefits everyone.



Social Impact in Town Centres

To ensure that the benefits of a regeneration are realised, there must be a huge focus on delivering positive impact for the local communities.

For this reason, we weave our five key social value themes through every aspect of the process, to create a stronger and more equitable town centre. These themes are: strengthening inclusion and social cohesion; community safety initiatives; eradicating health disparities; improving education and skills; increasing economic activity.

This set of priorities allows us to redevelop with a fully futureproofed town centre in mind, and informs our focus on key objectives such as: increasing the number of people living in the town centre; repurposing underutilised spaces; and supporting and improving the remaining retail assets.

Roots in Community

It's incredibly important that, throughout each stage of regeneration, we create and lead with a cohesive vision aligned with the community's needs and desires. So, we use our partnerships to enable us to deliver that vision across multiple avenues, including the design and delivery of local public policy, coordination of the private sector to address relevant local challenges, plus using third sector partnerships to drive forward their initiatives.

A huge advantage of our joint venture partnerships is that they allow us to undertake detailed data-driven analyses of the local community, understanding the council's long term goals and the town's strengths and opportunities. Together with public consultation (crucial for bringing the community on the journey with us), this blend leads to a hyperlocal understanding of human and consumer behaviours in that town, which feeds resilience and flexibility for the town centre's future.



INTERVIEW

Andrea George

Director of Town Centres & Consumer Brands

We sat down with Andrea George, to hear why Bruntwood wanted to breathe new life into Bury's Mill Gate shopping centre and how this plays into our wider vision for the town.

At Bruntwood, we like to take on big challenges. Developing at scale is the only way to make fundamental change in the places we operate and achieve our goal of creating thriving cities. Our work in Bury presents us with a new puzzle to solve in Greater Manchester: regenerating a 15 acre shopping centre!

Why are you passionate about this project?

I'm from Oldham, so I'm a townie at heart. Growing up, I saw how amazing Oldham was and also how difficult it's been to reposition the town following a decline. Being close to those challenges, my whole career has gone on to be focused on placemaking and regeneration.

People are really important to me; I believe in fairness, equality and inclusivity. I've spent much of my career creating destinations in cities. Changing places for the better is incredibly rewarding, but I think there's something even more personal about regenerating town centres. To work for Bruntwood, who invest in the right places for the right reasons and change people's lives for the better, is all the motivation I need to take on a challenge like Mill Gate!

Why did we acquire Mill Gate shopping centre?

A space as big and central as Mill Gate should be the beating heart of Bury's town centre. That's not quite the case right now. But we hope that through our redevelopment we can welcome residents and visitors of all ages and demographics, offering them all a compelling reason to visit Mill Gate.

Bury caught our eye because we see the regeneration of our towns and cities as a 'hub and spoke' model. Our cities sit at the core, with our towns around the edge. Each needs to be fit-for-purpose to ensure that the whole ecosystem thrives. Bruntwood's origins in Manchester date back to 1976, so it makes sense that we want to support the surrounding towns too - many of which suffer from severe deprivation so haven't been able to evolve alongside newer ways of working and living.

As long-term investors, we always look at the big picture. So of course when deciding to invest in the town, we were thrilled that the world-famous Bury Market is just around the corner. With a long history, and voted 'Best Market in Britain', it's destinations like this that showcase the brilliance of Bury and inspire a sense of pride and community that we want to bring to Mill Gate. The shopping centre is also close to the transport interchange, with great links to the city centre and The Rock shopping centre. Transforming Mill Gate is a central part of making sure Bury is a place that people really want to live, work and play!

We're taking a collaborative approach to regenerating Mill Gate - why is that?

We're delivering this development as a joint venture with Bury Council. Thanks to our history of collaboration with the public sector - as well as private, charitable and academic organisations - Bruntwood is connected with the right people that have a wealth of knowledge and insight into the town.

Our regeneration of Mill Gate fits into Bury Council's wider masterplan for the town centre. We're pleased to benefit from the strong leadership of the Council and our shared ambition to regenerate Bury at scale. Together, Bruntwood's commercial knowledge and legacy in the North West, combined with Bury Council's deep understanding of the town, creates a well-informed meeting of minds, making for a more nuanced, personal vision for the future of Bury.

'A meeting of minds' is an interesting phrase. Whose input takes priority in this kind of approach?

Whilst Bruntwood has almost 50 years of development expertise, we recognise that no one knows Bury better than its own residents.

Everyone deserves the right to live well in their own town. Regardless of age or economic status, there should be living, working and leisure opportunities on your doorstep that interest you! So to ensure we regenerate Mill Gate in the right way, we'll be engaging with local residents, giving the people of Bury the chance to have their say and influence the future of their town centre. They'll be the ones really driving the town's rebirth.

On Saturday 19th November 2022, we said hello to Bury's residents in an informal engagement day, where we simply had a physical presence in the Mill Gate and invited local people to come over and have a chat. It was a great opportunity to hear what people love about Bury and also what they'd like to see evolve. We also had the wonderfully talented Mancunian-Ukrainian freehand artist Myro Doodles

on hand to capture people's thoughts and feelings within an art piece, so it felt like a really positive exchange.

But that's just the start, and there will be more formal, structured consultations taking place with the local communities throughout 2023.

Why is input from local residents so important?

For a town to be sustainable, it needs to engage its own community, as well as attract new people from further afield. When people get what they need from their town, they want to stay. However, for many - especially the town's young people - the draw simply isn't there at the moment, with a recent CACI report showing that the 18-24 age bracket represents just 10% of Mill Gate's visitors.

Our new-look Mill Gate, as a key part of the Bury masterplan, aims to provide growth and opportunity. Drawing on close connections with Bury Market, Mill Gate will support local traders' entrepreneurial spirit. Offering a variety of unit sizes, the shopping centre can welcome grassroots traders as they transition from market stall to brick-and-mortar store, and then again when they're ready to upgrade to a larger space. This is all part of creating a micro-economy within Bury that supports the long-term success of the town centre. From national brands to local retailers, Mill Gate will offer a strong base in Bury from which to grow their business and enhance the town.



Reimagining the department store

Since the collapse of British Home Stores in 2016, 83% of UK department store space has shut down for good.

The loss of these iconic retailers is symptomatic of the decline of our town centres. If a town centre built around one large department store is no longer meeting the needs of local residents, how can we reimagine town centres to create a future-proofed offering?

Reimagined

Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we've seen a rise in the demand for flexibility. From how we work, to where we live and shop, we want choice. The pandemic also made us think more locally. Travel restrictions kept us close to home, prompting many to fall in love with their local areas again, rediscovering what's right on their doorsteps. So, how does the renewed love for local and increased demand for choice come together? Bruntwood hopes to answer that question with our Stamford Quarter Masterplan!



Launched in 2019, the Masterplan is our vision for regenerating Altrincham. We want to reinvigorate the high street, connect people, build community and improve public spaces at the heart of Altrincham. Our biggest development within this plan is Foundation.

Keeping a close eye on sustainability, we're reinventing a local landmark building into Foundation – Bruntwood's first Pioneer development in a town centre.

Part of Bruntwood and Trafford Council's £50m joint venture to transform Altrincham and Stretford town centres, Foundation breathes new life into the former Rackhams building at the heart of Stamford Quarter, reimagining it as a destination to meet, eat, drink and work. It's this mixed-used offering that we believe provides people with the variety and choice they're looking for, which unlocks longer-term, sustainable economic growth in the area.

Andrea George, Town Centre & Consumer Brands Director at Bruntwood Works says: *"Retail will always be at the heart of Stamford Quarter, but as the retail landscape evolves we must look at how we can redevelop the high street to future-proof and bring further vibrancy to the town centre."*



Repurposed

Sustainability sits at the core of all our developments and Foundation is no exception. Thanks to our green-fingered partners at I Want Plants, there will be a 375 sq m biophilic wall on the building's external facade. This greenery will include 36,000 carefully selected plants grown in South Manchester, which will reduce the building's carbon emissions whilst also creating a habitat for wildlife, equivalent to native scrubland and meadows found in and around Greater Manchester.

We're repurposing the existing structure where we can to limit the embodied carbon emission during construction. This means using recycled and second-hand tiles, laying low-carbon carpets and salvaging the vast majority of brick from the original building. Ultimately, the environmental impact of the construction will therefore be significantly reduced.

To reduce operational carbon - the amount of carbon needed to operate the building post-completion - we're investing in new thermal insulation, improving air tightness, replacing gas fired heating with high-efficiency heat pumps and introducing roof-mounted solar PV panels.

Reconnected

As long-term investors in place who collaborate with a wide range of partners, we're able to provide the strategic insight not only to enhance Foundation and Stamford Quarter, but also around how the area connects to Manchester's city centre and the wider region.

The first major milestone for Foundation was the removal of the well-known bridge structures. Removing the bridges has opened up the space, adding more light and transforming the arrival experience. This area will be enhanced further to make the outdoor space, along with the retail and leisure offering, more welcoming. There will also be more natural wayfinding for those heading to Altrincham Interchange, where they can make onward journeys via tram, train or bus. Travel to and from the area then becomes seamless, attracting more visitors from far and wide.

Reborn

Once a destination dedicated purely to national and global shopping brands, Foundation will be reborn as a hyperlocal hub to work, shop and socialise.

Work

We're providing 50,000 sq ft of revamped commercial workspace to create a new home for start-ups and freelancers to operate from the town centre. The flexible co-working element will encourage collaboration, while breakout areas on the new first-floor terrace are the perfect place to dream up new ideas. Wellbeing will also be woven into the working day with a fitness studio, showers and cycle storage.

Shop

The reimagined ground floor of Foundation will bring 25,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space up to date. Visitors can expect a welcoming arrival experience, complete with cafe, bar, restaurant and, of course, an exciting range of retailers.

Socialise

We expect increased footfall in the Stamford Quarter in light of the redevelopments so, as part of our placemaking approach, we'll be making this area eye-catching, vibrant and exciting.



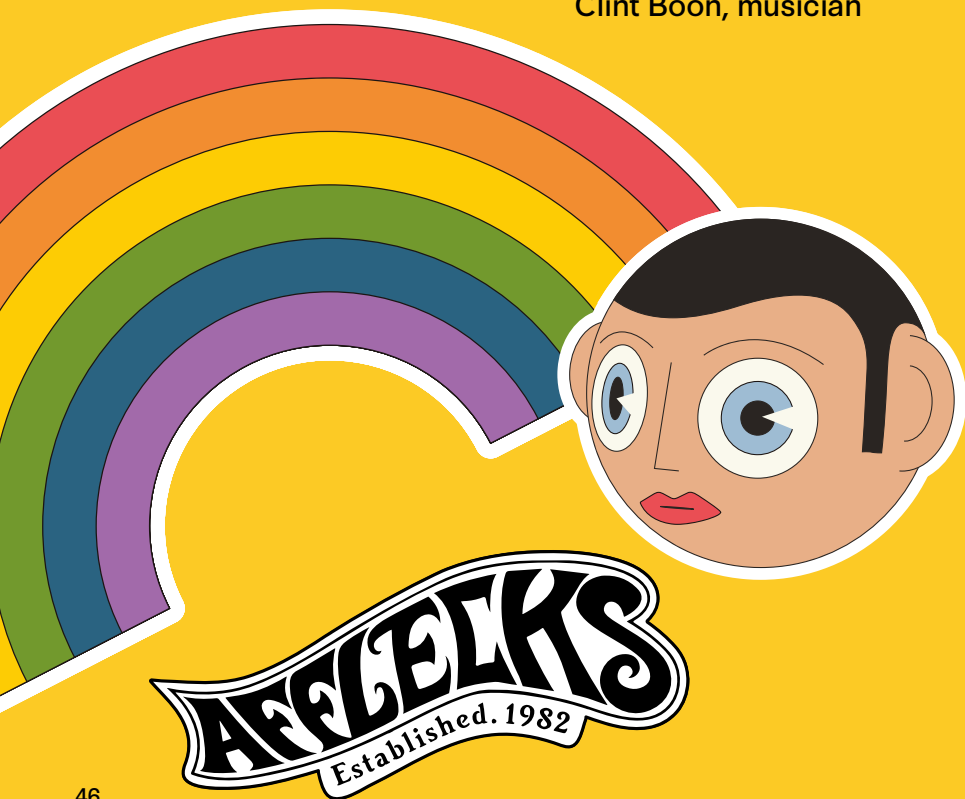
Defining mancunian culture for 40 Years

**"Afflecks has always given young
people with an indie spirit a place to
have a go at cutting their teeth"**

Wayne Hemingway, designer

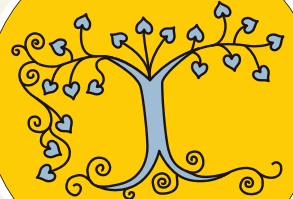
**"Afflecks is still the
beating heart of
Manchester"**

Clint Boon, musician



When it comes to retail destinations, there are few that capture the imagination more than Afflecks. An iconic emporium of curiosities and eclecticism, Afflecks has become synonymous with the very idea of Manchester, and has both reflected and defined the culture of the city over the years.

AFFLECKS



2022 marked the 40th birthday of Afflecks, and we chose to mark this momentous occasion with the launch of a specially-curated hardback book, celebrating the influence of Afflecks across generations, and capturing the memories of forty people who've lived and breathed the place over the years, as it enters its fifth decade. Thus, Afflecks 40 was born.

Afflecks is a community of people and businesses being true to who they are. Throughout its history, it has proudly welcomed creative misfits, curious visitors and people with a dream – all united by their individuality. Afflecks 40 was an ambitious attempt to encapsulate the spirit of that variety and inclusivity. With fascinating commentary from esteemed Manchester tour guide, writer and broadcaster Jonathan Schofield, the book features contributions from retailers, customers, employees and casual visitors who have all been a part of the Afflecks journey across the decades.

Peter Hook Musician

Well before it was Afflecks as we know it now, I used to go round there as a kid at maybe twelve years of age with Barney (Bernard Sumner, band member with Peter Hook in Joy Division and New Order). Ha, ha, maybe we were shoplifting because we had no money. And we went to look at girls of course. I remember the stairs there and one time a band was playing and it was Greasy Bear. On the bus was Martin Hannett. Hell come in useful wouldn't he, at Factory? (Hannett was producer/director at Factory Records).

I've been popping in ever since. What I've always liked about Afflecks is its village feel. The place has heart and soul. You can see that with the people who work there. They're doing what they want to do and they seem like they're loving doing it. You see the people coming in visiting and it feels like they're thinking the people who trade here are like me, individuals. It's miles away from the big conglomerates. Afflecks has kept its allure because it feels like it's still in touch.



The stunning book also showcases the portraits of those people, expertly captured by acclaimed photographer Paul Wolfgang Webster, who has permanent portraits in London's National Gallery and has photographed some of Manchester's most famous faces.

He says of the project: "This was a once in a lifetime chance to record, with my photographs, some of the people, among thousands of others, who have been part of the Afflecks story across 40 years. It was a milestone in my career.

"With the people in these pictures, on these pages, I have laughed, cried and been totally blown away. They brought back so many memories of my youth. Afflecks was, and always will be, part of Manchester's diverse and colourful history, the beating heart of the city."

That colourful history includes Afflecks catalysing the regeneration of the Northern Quarter at the turn of the millennium, surviving several lockdowns and weathering the storm of multiple recessions. It has also faced closure on a number of occasions, including in the 90s when a law around ancient market rights led to a council motion which challenged Afflecks' right to stay open, and again in 2008, when its original 25-year lease had ended and Bruntwood officially purchased the business from founders Elaine and James Walsh.

"We'd been working with the city on a broader strategy and it was clear Afflecks was part of the city's proposition, part of brand Manchester," says Chris Oglesby, CEO of Bruntwood. "It seemed obvious we needed all those independent traders in the buildings to continue providing that sense of difference and energy.

"Of course, we weren't retailers when we took it on, but we were and are always looking at ways to make our buildings and spaces more interesting and animated. Afflecks has reinforced our belief that for cities to thrive they have to have a real identity. As such it is the go-to example in the city centre of how to encourage small businesses to grow."

"We need places like Afflecks to show us variety in life, show us people can be different"

Sophie Willan, actress

This ethos of grass-roots growth is echoed in the famous metal galvanised tree structure which adorns the Tib Street side of the building, with the roots of the piece representing Afflecks itself, and the leaves and branches the various traders, artists and creators who have been launching their careers there since 1982.

Afflecks' General Manager AJ Martyn said: "The cultural significance of Afflecks cannot be overstated. It is the beating heart of the Northern Quarter, and where it all began. It has always been a safe space for creativity - encouraging the individuality that our city is known for.

"This inclusive, free spirited atmosphere allows amazing things to happen and the Afflecks 40 project tells just a few of those stories. It's really a love letter to one of the city's most beloved places, penned by the people of Manchester."

To launch the book, we also hosted a free exhibition on the top floor of Afflecks between October and November 2022, featuring specially-produced prints of the book's unique photography. As well as bringing something extra to a visitor's shopping experience, the exhibition served as a fitting reminder of Afflecks' longevity and resilience, which is a direct result of its strong, inclusive community.

Afflecks has always been at the forefront of exciting change, and we're so looking forward to seeing its evolution over the next 40 years.

**...AND ON
THE SIXTH
DAY, GOD
CREATED
MANCHESTER**

Bruntwood Works

One of the largest property providers in the UK. Firmly embedded in our towns and cities, Bruntwood Works blends work and lifestyle to create spaces that encourage interaction and create communities.

People, purpose, collaboration

– Ciara Keeling CEO of Bruntwood Works

This year has been a real whirlwind, with amazing highs and very tangible lows. But despite the challenges we've faced as individuals, as a business and as a nation, I am nonetheless amazed by what we've achieved in the last year, and feel remarkably positive about the future.

I'm incredibly proud that, even through the permacrisis of 2022, Bruntwood Works has managed to do what it does best and continue to innovate for a unique blend of work and lifestyle, with sustainability, wellness and cutting-edge technology at its heart. We have kept customers firmly at the centre of everything we do, with an exemplary Customer Experience offer and unrivalled business support through our Spark programme. This has translated into a Bruntwood Works NPS score of +32 and an 84% engagement rate with our customer app which launched over the summer.

Despite the huge threats to our industry due to a number of macro-environmental factors, demand has continued to climb, leading to our purchase of Castle House in Leeds, which we're relaunching as West Village, our first innovation campus for West Yorkshire.

Going live with our exciting plans for Foundation, our first regional Pioneer building, was also a highlight. Foundation will transform the work, leisure and retail offer in Altrincham, redefining the scope and potential of the broader hyperlocal economy at a key moment in the UK's monetary history.

Elsewhere, the launch of Climat, our first ever rooftop restaurant, at the beautiful Blackfriars House, and the confirmation of resident chef Daniel Heffy at The Plaza's brand new Nord restaurant, were huge milestones in our ongoing quest to push the envelope when it comes to hospitality. Both of these projects also remained true to the founding ethos of Bruntwood Works by supporting independents over big-name brands, offering more variety to the end user.

There have been awards, too. For Bruntwood Works itself, being named 'Commercial Developer of the Year' through Insider Media was an outstanding achievement, as was Bloc's recognition as 'Best Refurbished/Recycled Workspace' at the British Council for Offices Awards.

At the heart of all of these breakthroughs is our culture, sense of purpose and deep understanding of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of our industry and the wider world. Keeping the VUCA world in mind through everything we do helps us to enable innovation by providing great spaces, and an approach defined by creativity, rapidity and flexibility.

It means we can continue to evolve our products, services and workspaces to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers.

Of course, the central ingredient in all of this is our team's hard work, passion and dedication. We've seen our people continue to drive our business from one success to another, and pull together to create amazing community events across our cities, including supporting Bruntwood's incredible programme of activities as 'Official Commercial Property Development Provider' at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Without the wonderful people I am lucky enough to work with every day, we wouldn't have been able to achieve half of what we've managed this year.

In reviewing the last 12 months, I want to focus on those achievements. Not because they diminish the significance of the enormous difficulties we all face, but because they remind us of the power of people, purpose and collaboration. These factors have always been central to how we do things at Bruntwood Works, and I think they provide us with great hope for much brighter days to come. So again, I say thank you to all my colleagues at Bruntwood Works. You are the unsung heroes that shape our evolution. Let's see how awesome we can make 2023.



Workplace Innovation

“A business is built on its culture and our workspaces need to be places where our customers harness the best in their people, creating the right environment to supercharge health, happiness and productivity. Everything has to be people centric, whether that be the building itself, how it interacts with the surrounding community or its impact on the environment. The best technology or design in a building is nothing if it doesn’t add value to the people who use it.”

– Andrew Cooke, Operations Director, Bruntwood



Innovation has been hard baked into our DNA from the beginning but there have been so many firsts for us in the last 12 months, not least in the way we have continued to push the boundaries of what a workspace can be, creating spaces that live and breathe our purpose, while maintaining the unique blend of work and lifestyle that is synonymous with Bruntwood Works.

The stand-out trifecta in 2022 were: *The Alberton*, which evolves our Pioneer proposition with wellbeing at the core of its design; *Ev0*, setting new standards for sustainability as the UK’s lowest carbon workspace; and *Pall Mall*, a brand new hub for businesses with strong ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) credentials, which sets a blueprint of how landmark, listed buildings can be repositioned to be ESG exemplars.

All of these are perfect examples of how we’re redefining the office and leading the future of workspace through our strong purpose-led approach. By ensuring our spaces are designed to be vibrant, sustainable and supportive of our colleagues’ and customers’ wellbeing, we’re able to put our words into action and truly create thriving cities. These three exciting new developments are ahead of the curve, raising the bar for the industry and transforming what work looks like.

Let’s find out why...



Above: The Alberton

The Alberton – Pioneer of Pioneers

The Manchester of today was founded on industry, but gone are the days when burnout was a badge of honour and workplaces hummed with toil and labour. While retaining the strong work ethic which made ‘Cottonopolis’ world famous, Manchester is now very much a 21st Century city, recognising that people need time to recharge and recuperate to have the energy and productivity to be their best selves.

Drawing on this philosophy, The Alberton – which gained planning approval in November 2022 – will deliver a market-leading workspace that champions hospitality, sustainability, technology, wellbeing and design.

Operating at net zero carbon, The Alberton will deliver a workplace offering that wouldn’t be out of place in a hotel, boasting a rooftop pavilion on the building’s 17th and 18th floors

and a wellness centre. This will play host to the country’s first rooftop pool in a commercial office building providing 360-degree views of the city. On the ground floor will be a riverside bar and restaurant, where the best of Manchester’s food and drink scene overlooks the River Irwell.

Standing on the site of Albert Street Gas Works, the first municipal public gas supplier in the world, The Alberton recognises the pioneers who went before and the sacrifice of all those whose hard graft has left its indelible mark on Manchester. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th Centuries was typified by soot, smoke and hardship. By harnessing holistic wellbeing to drive productivity in a smarter, cleaner and more sustainable way, The Alberton is well-poised for Manchester’s leading role in the next industrial revolution with a forward-thinking approach to the meaning of work.



Bruntwood Works

Above: Ev0

Ev0 – Rebel with a Cause

It's no secret that we're in the midst of a climate emergency. It's hard to shy away from the stats on the impact that carbon emissions are having on our planet. Businesses are actioning green commitments and pledging to make a difference to their own operations, but buildings still factor very highly in the equation.

The fact is, 40% of the UK's carbon emissions come from the built environment, and 80% of the buildings that exist today will still be standing in 2050. So it stands to reason that buildings need to be designed and made with the future in mind.

Ev0 truly breaks the mould in sustainable buildings, being totally carbon neutral both in construction and operation. Plus, we'll offer complete transparency throughout the project, allowing the development to act as a genuine prototype for future new buildings, and champion the cause of sustainable workspaces.

Located in the thriving Greater Manchester suburb of Didsbury, this groundbreaking development will be 100% electric, with all energy generated on-site, or provided by Bruntwood Group's co-operative wind farm at Kirk Hill. Uniquely,

it will also be built using a mass timber frame that captures and stores carbon from the atmosphere, in the same way a tree does, allowing it to have a positive environmental impact.

For an idea of the scale of that impact, the total amount of carbon stored within Ev0's timber frame will be equivalent to **24 million** 1.5L plastic bottles produced, **5769** journeys along the famous Route 66 or **2,500** return flights from Manchester to New York. Pretty staggering, right?

Ev0 will also feature smart technology, innovative architectural and interior design, greenery throughout and wellness facilities, all aimed at creating a building for the future and powering that all-important work/life balance just like The Alberton. Plus, its energy-efficient design means reduced occupational costs – making workspace here more affordable for our customers in a challenging economic climate.

Our plans for Ev0, the UK's lowest carbon workspace, were submitted in November 2022 – and we can't wait to share more news on the next leg of this exciting journey.

Pall Mall – Together for the Future

Tying all these themes together is the iconic Pall Mall, which received planning approval in October 2022. We don't expect to create thriving cities single-handedly – ensuring the places where we live and work are futureproofed means bringing others on the journey with us. Pall Mall will be a community of like-minded businesses with people and the planet in mind.

Located on Manchester's renowned King Street, the instantly recognisable Pall Mall is an opportunity for us to reimagine a heritage building, transforming it into a thriving community of socially conscious businesses with the shared goal of creating real, lasting and positive change for the world we live in. By bringing businesses together in this way, we're building on the spirit of togetherness which is central to the way we do business and is key for the future of our towns and cities.

Operating at net zero carbon, with all energy supplied to the building derived from renewable sources, Pall Mall is a 'living lab' through which we will build a blueprint for how existing buildings

should be repositioned in the future. We'll use intelligent building management technology throughout, to make lighting, water and heating systems more environmentally friendly, and allowing businesses that have wellbeing, sustainability and carbon neutrality as part of their own strategies to connect and innovate together. And, by retaining the existing Grade II listed structure, we've bypassed the need to rebuild – which means we've avoided 7,900 tonnes of additional carbon emissions (equivalent to around 16,000 flights from London to New York).

Building on Bruntwood Works' trademark style of hospitality-led, experiential workspaces, Pall Mall will feature a state-of-the-art wellness studio, outdoor piazza and a spectacular new roof terrace to encourage networking and bring out the natural synergies of the purpose-led organisations that will call the building home. With completion set for late 2023, Pall Mall is a perfect blend of old and new, and we're excited to see the great things that will come out of its rebirth.

Below: Pall Mall





INTERVIEW

Matthew Wright

Head of Commercial for Leeds & Birmingham

West Village, an environment built for people to thrive. Here, Matthew explains what makes this development so special and how we hope it will benefit businesses and the local community.



What makes this development unique?

One of our biggest developments yet, West Village started life as three distinct buildings: Castle House, West One and 100 Wellington Street. But to create our vision for a large-scale, collaborative space, we decided to create one colossal innovation hub - the first of its kind for the city.

A key part of this includes transforming the large courtyard area which connects the buildings, merging together the external and internal spaces with the use of biophilia. This area is also a designated public space so it will welcome both existing and new customers, alongside the public, with the space hosting pop-up retailers throughout the year to entice people into the space to spend time having a coffee and a catch up.

Why are Bruntwood long-term investors in Leeds?

Leeds is one of the fastest growing digital cities in the UK! The city is home to a skilled workforce of over 1.4 million people and the fastest growth of foreign investment in the North of England. With a focus on innovation through collaboration and community, West Village aims to provide Leeds' growing ecosystem the space it needs to catapult Yorkshire's growing economy to new heights.

How will West Village benefit businesses and the local community?

West Village marks the latest milestone in our longstanding commitment to investing in Yorkshire. As our first Pioneer development in the city, the project's location within the innovation arc will provide customers with access to the University's talented graduates, as well as a range of world-class research and development facilities. It will also provide additional green space in the city.

What amenities are on offer at West Village?

As you'd expect from our Pioneer developments, we've gone all out: new coffee shop, pop up retailers, wellbeing studio, business lounge, external courtyard, roof terraces, showers and state of the art bike storage.



Who is West Village for? Who are we hoping to attract?

West Village is for everyone! Here, we can cater to any business, from a startup looking for desks a few days a week, to multinational businesses looking for large regional office space.

Should people expect to see more innovation hubs from Bruntwood?

Yes! Bruntwood is in a unique position as the UK's largest provider of space to science and technology businesses. Not only can we design and deliver outstanding innovation spaces, we integrate innovation ecosystem specialists to ensure the ongoing success of the businesses based in our buildings. We have been successful in this approach across a range of cities and campuses, and have great ambitions for many more hubs.

How have you found the process of bringing this development to life?

We've spent a number of years trying to purchase Castle House, the last piece of the puzzle, so this development has been a long time coming. To now see our ideas becoming a reality is really exciting!

For me, the best part so far has been unlocking the courtyard space which has long been underutilised as an amenity. The new development allows us to fully achieve its potential as an outdoor space for collaboration and events throughout the year.

We've got challenging works ahead as we construct the new space around West One, a building full of existing customers. But we're up to the challenge and looking forward to giving our customers this new and improved space.

INTERVIEW

Adam Tillis

Bruntwood Works's Head of Development

As long-term investors in place, Bruntwood thinks decades ahead to shape thriving cities which meet the needs of their residents today and tomorrow.



So, how do we provide spaces that meet customers' modern needs, whilst also honouring the culture and history of the buildings we regenerate? It's a challenging balance to strike - especially when considering Bruntwood's long history of redeveloping heritage buildings. By this, we mean buildings which have historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or ecological value. This year alone, we've begun transforming Bond, Kings House and Pall Mall in Manchester.

Adam explains our approach to transforming heritage buildings.

Why are you personally passionate about this work?

I find heritage buildings really interesting! Typically, the scale and ornate detailing are something we don't see in construction today and each building tends to be unique in nature, whether that's the story behind the building itself or special features we can uncover, restore and appreciate as part of our redevelopment works. Heritage buildings are often more challenging to redevelop and bring into a modern day use, but they offer up a great canvas to work with from an aesthetic and architectural perspective.

Bruntwood Works



Kings House, Manchester



Bond, Manchester

Why is it important to invest in preserving the history of a building?

Older buildings tend to form a key part of the history and culture of our towns and cities. People also often have more of a connection with these buildings, so it's vital to preserve and transform them for future use. These buildings spark public interest in the architectural landscape of our cities and tell stories of both the past and present.

Recycling these buildings as Bruntwood have been doing for over 40 years also has huge environmental benefits in particular from an embodied carbon perspective. For instance, through retaining the existing structure of Pall Mall we have avoided the need to rebuild, which would have resulted in approximately 7,900 tonnes of additional carbon emitted - equivalent to around 16,000 flights from London to New York.



Bruntwood Works

Kings House Manchester



Bond, CGI of Banking Hall

What approach do you take to these transformations?

The starting point is always around identifying areas of significance and special architectural and historic interest. These items in particular must be worked into our transformation and often come with the benefit of offering up something unique to the design of the space. We then have to strike a balance between appreciating the building's past and bringing it into the present, ensuring the design works for the proposed use of the building.

One of our biggest but most interesting challenges is around net zero carbon and in particular the operational carbon of our heritage buildings. Often there are limitations around interventions to the building fabric and we need to ensure the thermal performance of the building is improved without compromising original facades and the character of the building.

What's a recent building transformation that you're particularly proud of?

Blackfriars House sits within the Parsonage Conservation area in Manchester city centre. Constructed in 1923, the building was designed by architect Harry Fairhurst whose designs defined the 'dressed' warehouse typology in response to the unique history of Manchester as the centre of the cotton trade. The extension to the roof, which now houses our rooftop restaurant Climat,, had to consider the typical Fairhurst steel grid pattern. The end product is an amazing, modern day structure, developed in the same grid pattern as the steel frame of the building, which sits nicely alongside the original structure and stone facade of the building. This will become one of the most talked about rooftops in the city!



Bond, Banking Hall

Has anything surprised you in recent building transformations?

We have uncovered lots of surprises over the years! At our Bond building in Manchester's city centre, we discovered some gorgeous windows that had been hidden away. Recently, we found some lovely ornate tiles to the staircase at Kings House, as well as wooden cobbled roads into St James' and a grand marble staircase to the main reception that was covered with carpet. It's amazing to rediscover these former treasures and bring them back to life for our customers to enjoy today!

Pioneering



As we approached creating our first Pioneer building in Liverpool, The Plaza, we knew it had to be something special. With a workforce of 6 million only an hour's drive away and over 50,000 businesses across the region, Liverpool is bursting with opportunity.

The Plaza Liverpool

at the Plaza

Our long-term investment in Liverpool

Our latest milestone in Bruntwood's long-term investment in Liverpool, The Plaza promises to put hospitality at its heart. We imagined a space to connect, create and collaborate that brings people together over something they're guaranteed to love: good food and drink!

Post-COVID, we decided to take our hospitality offering up a notch and with The Plaza, we've put it at the core of the experience. We see hospitality as a key component of our workspaces. With the lines between work and play increasingly blurred, our customers are demanding a flexible, holistic experience. The Plaza offers just that with amazing workspaces, alongside 1960s-inspired interiors with a modern twist on the ground floor, that boasts a reception, lounge, coffee shop, bar and restaurant. Imagined by interior designers, Phaus, this arrival experience welcomes workers, tempts passers-by and encourages you to relax and unwind.

Days at the office are no longer seen as part of the grind, office days are looked forward to and savoured as now they are curated to make the most of. Imagine: grabbing a latte from Bold Street Coffee in the morning, heading upstairs for team meetings, hosting clients for lunch in the ground-floor restaurant, then having a post-work tippie with friends at the bar to round off the day. The Plaza allows customers to create a working day that works for them!

No matter how customers decide to work at The Plaza, hospitality is at the heart. We collaborate with local, independent partners, giving a platform to Liverpool's best hospitality traders. It's a tried-and-tested method that's seen success in Manchester with the likes

of coffee shop Trove at Bloc, and soon to open bar and restaurant, Climat at Blackfriars House. So for Liverpool, it was only right that the much-loved Bold Street Coffee became the cornerstone of our ground floor. The biggest hospitality offering that Bruntwood has ever created within a workplace setting, the entire ground floor is dedicated to food and drink, seamlessly blending work and lifestyle. Whether you're planning a three-course dinner or an impromptu coffee catch up, there's a welcoming space for you.

Beyond the hospitality-focused arrival experience, The Plaza had been kitted out with a state-of-the-art fitness studio offering that's an essential ingredient of Pioneer. From Les Mills exercise equipment to regular yoga classes, to a luxury shower and changing experience, and over 140 bike spaces encouraging active travel, customers are prompted to put their wellbeing first at every turn.

Combining hospitality, design and workspace, The Plaza is a true destination set within the heart of Liverpool's Commercial District. It's clear that the building will play host to a unique mix of people from big businesses to start-ups, entrepreneurs and local residents. This blend makes for a space of meaningful connection that encourages wellness, inspires productivity and is home to a real sense of community. In this way, the building nods to its origins in 1963. A space that facilitates connection and embraces transformation. We're proud to breathe new life into the space and create an experience that Liverpool truly deserves!

Hospitality Reaches

One of our Pioneer trademarks is providing a blend of work and play that creates unique experiences for our customers and the wider community. With Climat, our latest addition to Blackfriars House, we've taken this idea to new heights as the first ever Pioneer development with a rooftop hospitality offering.



New Heights

This ambitious new space is from the brains behind Chester's Covino, famed for its seasonally-inspired small plates, paired with top-notch wines. After earning a place in the Michelin Guide, the team is taking on Manchester with their latest concept – Climat, boasting panoramic views across Manchester.

'Climat' is the term used in Burgundy for a wine-growing plot, so lovers of the grape are in for a real treat with a curated collection of around 250 tipples to choose from, alongside a menu that changes daily.

Following the multi-million-pound renovation of Blackfriars, the fully-let building is home to a melting pot of businesses across technology, creative, digital and more. Alongside our independent coffee shop Bean, 70-seat auditorium and podcast studio, Climat offers another compelling reason to work from Blackfriars. Of course, we had to give our customers something extra, so they benefit from access to a private, rooftop event space. From company parties to client dinners, this is really something special for customers to wow their network.

Luke Richardon, Covino's Head Chef and now the Executive Chef of both sites, shares what this new chapter means for himself and the city: "Following the success of our daily changing ingredient-led food menu and small, producer heavy wine list ethos in Chester, we're honoured to be able to bring these values to the stunning building that is Blackfriars House. To cook an evolution of our Covino blueprint, nestled in amongst Manchester's legendary skyline, is something we are relishing."

"Both myself and Climat's Head Chef, Simon Ulph, have worked closely together to develop an opening menu we are both super proud of and we think does justice to the building and the surroundings. We believe we offer something completely different to the Manchester restaurant scene and we can't wait to welcome you and the city to our restaurant!"

As part of Manchester's post-pandemic revitalisation, Climat represents the 'new normal' for hospitality within workspace at Bruntwood. A space to connect, celebrate and relax, we're enjoying seeing our customers, and Manchester residents, come together over first-class food and drink at Climat.



Pictured: Climat, Blackfriars House



"A space to connect, celebrate and relax, we're enjoying seeing our customers, and Manchester residents, come together over first-class food and drink at Climat"



Bruntwood SciTech

Bruntwood's 50:50 joint venture with Legal & General, the UK's leading property and innovation services provider dedicated to the growth of the UK science and technology sector.

Strengthening the UK's innovation ecosystem

– Kate Lawlor, CEO, Bruntwood SciTech

This year, we gained further insight and confirmation into the government's Levelling Up strategy and its pledge to increase investment into R&D by £22bn per year by 2024/25. We have been calling on the government to distribute targeted R&D funding across the regions in emerging clusters, and to provide these areas with the tools and independence to utilise this investment in a way that is representative of their individual strengths. The announcement of the three Innovation Accelerators earlier this year was a positive step, and we believe the distribution of this innovation funding across Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Glasgow will be the key to unlocking wider economic growth and drive productivity outside of the Golden Triangle.

As a business, we continue to support this strategy as we invest into world class science and technology infrastructure and support across the UK. Through working with our local partners across each region, we're always looking for new opportunities to power the success of businesses across the industry, and enable the UK to excel as a world leading R&D country; in turn supporting the creation of jobs and improving livelihoods in our cities.

We've carried this ambition through the duration of 2022 in our expansion and first foothold in Scotland with the acquisition of Met Tower in Glasgow, alongside the practical completion of the highly anticipated Base building at Manchester Science Park and the £21m refurbishment of laboratory and office space at Alderley Park's Mereside campus - both marking significant milestones in the masterplan developments for both sites.

We've also made further investments into our current portfolio, making gains in establishing Birmingham as a real life sciences opportunity zone, as we progressed the construction of the first phase of Birmingham Health Innovation Campus, which will open later this year.

Our highly specialist sector specific business support and community engagement offering remains our unique competitive advantage, as we look to support our customers' growth with access to funding, skills and talent through our growing network of public, private, academic and clinical partnerships. Many of our new partnerships this year were representative of our commitment to tackle the skills and talent challenges faced by businesses across the regions. In Manchester, we've worked closely with North West-based social enterprise, Agent Academy, to create a direct pathway that connects emerging talent with opportunities and employers in the region - such as those based at our Circle Square campus - with future employees. Meanwhile in Birmingham, we're proud to support Digital Innovators with the Digital Ideator programme, an initiative that gives young people access to unique career-changing opportunities with sector leading employers across the West Midlands.

This year we've also invested into businesses directly; we've supported female founders across West Yorkshire with bespoke business support, and have contributed funds to investment initiatives such as Northern Gritstone and the Greater Manchester and Cheshire Life Sciences fund.

There's much more to come in 2023. I'm particularly looking forward to submitting the masterplan proposals for ID Manchester and Melbourn Science Park, the opening of Enterprise Wharf, and beginning the next phase of development at Circle Square, Citylabs, and Manchester Science Park, as well as starting on site at Met Tower. I look forward to sharing our achievements with you again this time next year.

Scan to view our highlights of 2022



Manchester's newest tech neighbourhood

Developing a successful innovation ecosystem at Manchester's newest tech neighbourhood

Manchester's newest neighbourhood Circle Square continues to prove popular as the destination-of-choice for the city's growing number of tech and digital startups and scaleups, as well as global market leaders looking to establish themselves amid the Northern Powerhouse and Manchester's innovation district; home to the largest clinical academic campus in Europe.

The tech and digital campus has attracted a portfolio of influential tech businesses since it opened its doors, providing new headquarters for businesses such as America's No.1 TV streaming platform Roku, Autocab - recently acquired by Uber, and Octopus Energy.

But what is it that makes the campus, located within Manchester's Oxford Road Corridor, so appealing to tech companies of all sizes?

How nurturing a successful innovation ecosystem can attract tech giants

Innovation ecosystems work best when disruptive startups are co-located with larger entities who are constantly looking to stay ahead of the curve. By their very nature, larger organisations can become overly bureaucratic, stifling innovation. So, having major players located geographically adjacent to an incubator filled with these disruptors, allows for a win-win approach to innovation.

The larger entities get to collaborate with innovative startups without the barriers of the foundations of a global operation, and the startups get to test their technologies on large sets of customer data, as well as gaining expertise and potential capital.

For this reason, Circle Square has become an attractive destination for large corporations looking to establish themselves in Greater Manchester and who want to maintain a market advantage.

Over 60% of startups fail within their first 3 years, and this figure only increases year on year to the point that a very small number of startups are truly successful. Some of the biggest reasons for this failure are a lack of clear messaging, no product market fit, or inadequate customer engagement.

Working within an ecosystem that allows for engagement, testing, and collaboration with successful global brands is a huge selling point for the startups in the Circle Square community. Bruntwood SciTech's Innovation Services team is dedicated to identifying opportunities of collaboration within and between campuses, and facilitates a range of introductions and activities with that goal in mind.

Tapping into talent pools and bridging the digital skills gap

The economy is increasingly reliant on technology talent and experience to fuel innovation. Greater Manchester offers over 20,000 STEM graduates per year, with world leading education and facilities; it's not hard to see why big names like Roku and Octopus Energy want to set up shop and attract this talent. The size and affordability of the region is also a huge plus, with commuter times as little as 10 minutes in a hyper connected and affordable city, it plays into the attractiveness of Greater Manchester as a location to establish and grow.

Our Innovation Services team works closely with customers, partners and stakeholders on an ongoing basis to identify key barriers to business growth. One of the biggest challenges we hear time and time again is the skills gap. This year, we had the opportunity to partner with an alternative skills provider who is also a customer at Circle Square, Agent Academy.

Specialist business support programmes

As a service we saw a gap in the delivery of business support to our customers. Greater Manchester has a wealth of support providers, from the Growth Company through to the universities, via the funding landscape. Our mission is to create thriving innovation districts, and we can't do that in silo. From the design of our spaces to the delivery of business support, we work in partnership with key stakeholders and private partners.

In order to streamline the awareness of some of this support, this year we launched quarterly 'Tech Thursdays'. These events aim to bring all of these providers together, to showcase the range of support to an audience of tech startups and scaling businesses from across the region. Starting with a networking lunch, followed by a panel discussion, drop in sessions, hot desking, office yoga and networking drinks, it really is a day of knowledge transfer, collaboration and creativity.



Scan to hear from
Circle Square
customers Octopus,
Autocab & Roku



Growth in Birmingham as a leading science and tech hub

Enterprise Wharf tops out

In March, a year after construction started, the Innovation Birmingham campus welcomed stakeholders from across the region to the topping out of Enterprise Wharf, the city's first smart-enabled building. Guests were presented with the exciting vision for the campus and enjoyed street food and locally brewed ale as they learnt more about the future of the campus and surrounding Birmingham Knowledge Quarter.

Enterprise Wharf will more than double the size of the Innovation Birmingham campus and provide almost 120,000 sq ft of premium space for innovative tech companies.

"Fast-growing tech and digital businesses thrive from proximity to one another. Enterprise Wharf will unlock new relationships when it opens its doors to the city in Spring 2023"

- Jamie Clyde, Director of the Southern region

Building digital skills: a partnership for the future

In January, Bruntwood SciTech partnered with Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and not-for-profit training provider Digital Innovators to launch The Ideator, which gives young people access to unique career changing opportunities with sector leading employers across the West Midlands. Based at Innovation Birmingham, the programme specialises in developing digital skills within the region to help address a gap worth £50bn to the national economy. By October, this pilot programme had secured the support from 25 major regional employers including HS2, the NHS and Vanti, supporting 382 students in the region.

Launching the Global Growth Programme against the backdrop of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

In July, Birmingham hosted the Commonwealth Games, welcoming 5054 athletes and 72 nations from across the world. As the 'Official Commercial Property Development Provider', Bruntwood hosted 580 customers from seven regions, hosting events at Innovation Birmingham and city centre locations. The Games aligned with Bruntwood's mission to 'create thriving cities', and Bruntwood SciTech used the platform to launch the Global Growth Programme at Innovation Birmingham. Working with the West Midlands Growth Company, the programme provides soft landing space and business support to 30 tech businesses from across the globe looking to launch in the UK and land in Birmingham.



Above: No.1
Birmingham Health
Innovation Campus

Raising the roof with Birmingham Tech

As an official partner and home of Birmingham Tech, 2022 yielded many highlights, including the opportunity to host Birmingham Tech's hugely successful Summer Social, where 600 delegates from the tech sector were welcomed to Innovation Birmingham.

During a packed week in October, West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and 100 tech leaders enjoyed an opening breakfast at Innovation Birmingham. The team also hosted a regional tech showcase attended by 250 young people from local schools, sponsored the 'scale up' conference and participated in various panel sessions.

"Working with Birmingham Tech aligns brilliantly with our commitment to supporting the growth of the tech sector in Birmingham. As the UK's top regional city for startups for seven years running, the city also boasts world-class universities, a skilled talent pool and fantastic transport links, all of which make it an attractive prospect for tech. Together, we can provide the environment, ecosystem and community that the tech sector in Birmingham needs to form, scale and grow at a local, national and global level."

- Jamie Clyde, Director of the Southern region

A festival for life sciences at Birmingham Health Innovation Campus

In October, Bruntwood SciTech celebrated an important milestone in the development of Birmingham Health Innovation Campus (BHIC) as No.1 BHIC topped out. The first phase of the development will create 133,000 sq ft of space for life science companies, and will be home to the University of Birmingham's Precision Health Technologies Accelerator.

A 'Festival of Life Sciences' was organised to celebrate the significant milestone, with a keynote address from Dr. Chris Smith, medical consultant at Cambridge University, Founder of The Naked Scientists podcast and presenter on BBC Radio 5 Live. Guests enjoyed biology themed games, pick and mix and cocktails and heard from Professor Adam Tickell, Vice Chancellor at the University of Birmingham, and Dr. Kath Mackay about how BHIC will create a unique point of focus for life sciences in the city for the first time. As well as creating up to 10,000 local jobs and contributing £400m GVA to the region's economy, BHIC will be a place where the University's specialisms in areas such as cell and gene therapies, medtech and precision medicine and trauma surgery can really shine; enabled by first class facilities and wide reaching connections created by Bruntwood SciTech.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: *"No.1 BHIC is an incredibly exciting project for our region - bringing world class R&D to Birmingham and helping to transform health outcomes for local people. I have no doubt that BHIC is set to become a beacon of British ingenuity and scientific excellence. This state of the art facility will result in breakthroughs for patients and healthcare professionals around the world and, crucially, will support economic recovery right across the West Midlands in the months and years ahead."*



Greater Manchester and Cheshire Life Science Fund launches

GMC Life Science Fund by Praetura bolsters the North West's flourishing life sciences sector

Starting with an initial £20m commitment, the GMC Life Science Fund by Praetura was launched at No.1 Circle Square in May.

The partnership between Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Praetura Ventures and Bruntwood SciTech combines capital, expertise and resources to help investee companies in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington to scale.

With the aim of supporting innovation and the growth of the North West's knowledge economy, the GMC Life Science Fund will create more skilled jobs and help businesses to expand internationally. Bruntwood SciTech is proud to have committed £5m to the fund, alongside £5m from Cheshire and Warrington LEP and £10m from the GMCA.

Across the North West, the life science sector currently employs more than 28,000 people and is a key pillar of growth for the

knowledge economy. The fund offers early-stage businesses and SMEs within Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington the chance to scale through the capital, expertise and resources provided by the organisations within the partnership and investments of between £50k and £2m.

The fund is managed by northern-centric venture capital investor Praetura Ventures. Their team is committed to supporting life science start-up founders to build the best businesses possible. They also help the innovators who are changing the sector for the better through dedicated support, networks and resources, including Praetura's celebrated operational partner programme which provides additional expertise and mentoring from industry experts.

The North West has a truly vibrant life sciences sector, recognised globally for the talent and innovation it fosters.

"This powerful ecosystem can support the translation of ground-breaking science and research into successful, scalable businesses for the long term," said Executive Chair of Bruntwood SciTech, Chris Oglesby.

"It is as a direct result of long-term partnerships between public and private sector organisations that the sector continues to thrive, enabling opportunities for life science businesses to gain direct access to research, talent and the NHS to accelerate their growth. We very much look forward to supporting the next generation of life science entrepreneurs with this fund."

So far award-winning, early stage Healthtech company, BlueSkeye AI Ltd, and chemical manufacturer, LCC, have both been successful in receiving funding.

Born out of the University of Liverpool, LCC manufactures complex chemical components, which are used to test and create new drugs, and counts 11 of the world's top 20 pharmaceutical companies as repeat customers, who rely on its components to help fight a range of diseases and conditions, including cancer, Alzheimer's, dementia, pain and respiratory illnesses.

With a mission to improve people's quality of life through the use of its proprietary face and voice analysis technology, BlueSkeye AI is a spin-out from the University of Nottingham's School of Computer Science Founded in 2019.

New investments are set to be announced in the near future, further supporting innovation and knowledge expansion across the region.



High Value Manufacturing Catapult opens new HQ and regional hubs

High Value Manufacturing Catapult to boost regional productivity and selects three Bruntwood SciTech hubs

The High Value Manufacturing (HVM) Catapult made a significant statement in the past 12 months in its support for 'Levelling Up' and selected three new regional hubs to embed themselves into. Bruntwood SciTech's campuses were chosen for all three hubs, opening its new headquarters at Innovation Birmingham and taking space at Manchester's Circle Square and Liverpool Science Park.

Helping businesses to innovate, the HVM Catapult will support the creation of high-quality jobs in each region and spark further investment. This partnership aligns perfectly with Bruntwood SciTech's vision and model of curating interconnected, industry-leading innovation districts and ecosystems across the UK.



A new HQ at Innovation Birmingham

Having supported over 22,000 companies to commercialise their industry-defining ideas, the opening of HVM Catapult's HQ at Innovation Birmingham signifies the next stage of growth for the organisation. The move highlights Birmingham's industrial potential and will help smaller businesses improve their productivity through research and support.

HVM Catapult will serve as a brilliant sector catalyst – joining dots, showcasing talent and shining a spotlight on best practice, helping the region to fulfil its true potential in terms of the contribution that R&D, innovation and advanced manufacturing can make to its overall economic performance.

Innovation Birmingham's existing technology ecosystem makes the campus an ideal location for HVM Catapult's HQ. Here, they will receive direct introductions to fast growing science and tech startups and scaleups who would benefit from their support.

The wider manufacturing sector in the West Midlands supports over 300,000 direct jobs, with 50 globally competitive manufacturing enterprises in the region, and accounting for £3.5bn of gross value added every year. The average economic contribution (GVA) per job of these companies is 48% above the UK average for the sector.

However, the GVA per job of the wider manufacturing base in the region is 10% below the UK average. By supporting smaller companies and enhancing regional supply chains through joint research and innovation – from simplifying production lines to developing more efficient technology – HVM Catapult will help to bridge the region's productivity gap. By reaching the national average, the regional economy would be boosted by £1.5bn a year.

"As a long-time supporter of the HVM Catapult, we're delighted to welcome the organisation to Innovation Birmingham here in the city's Knowledge Quarter," said Jamie Clyde, director of Innovation Services and the Southern region for Bruntwood SciTech. *"They will be located in the heart of the city's innovation district, placing them within the ecosystem of leading academic institutions and tech and digital businesses that we're proud to have nurtured here."*

The first step into Manchester

Their new space at Circle Square, taken alongside one of the Catapult's founding members and deep tech innovation organisation, the Centre for Process and Innovation (CPI), is HVM Catapult's first in Manchester, and will support the city and wider region to deliver its technology and innovation plans and boost the local economy. HVM Catapult and CPI will encourage businesses to invest in innovation and support the creation of new products and processes, which could boost productivity in the region by up to £500m a year.

Speaking of the move to Manchester, Mayor Andy Burnham said: *"Going back to the Industrial Revolution, our city-region has been at the centre of advances in science and technology. Innovation is just as important to our future. Increased R&D spending and more productive businesses can power the growth of our economy and level up the North."*

HVM Catapult Chief Executive, Katherine Bennett said: *"Backing manufacturing through technology innovation in Manchester is an important part of the 'levelling up' agenda. Manufacturing not only brings direct benefits to the local economy, but every 100 manufacturing jobs creates in turn an additional 90 jobs in the wider economy."*

Expanding across the North of England, the new Manchester office, alongside its Liverpool Science Park office, will further connect the innovation ecosystem and boost prosperity. Located in the heart of Manchester's innovation district, the Oxford Road Corridor, they will be perfectly placed in immediate proximity to the world-renowned academic institutions and the largest cluster of the city's science and tech businesses, enabling HVM Catapult to tap into the ecosystem across the Bruntwood SciTech network.

HVM Catapult's seven centres of industrial innovation, including CPI, were brought together in 2011 by Innovate UK. In 2021/22, the network worked with more than 5,500 industrial partners.



INTERVIEW

What's next for Glasgow's Met Tower?

Peter Crowther Property Director - Bruntwood SciTech



Peter shines a light on the business' decision to expand north of the border and his hopes for the development.

2022 marked Bruntwood SciTech's first investment in Scotland with the acquisition of the iconic Met Tower building. The 14-storey office building in the heart of the city centre and innovation district – that's been vacant since 2014 – is set to become a new hub for tech and digital businesses. Since then, a further £30m has been announced in a bid to supercharge the tech sector in the city. The added investment will include the development of a new workspace of more than 100,000 sq ft adjacent to the Grade B listed Met Tower.

Why Glasgow, and what is it that makes Glasgow, in particular Met Tower, a good location for a dedicated digital and tech hub?

The expansiveness of the city, its excellent transport links, and diversity of economy, academia and people make it an attractive investment from a real estate perspective. There's an opportunity here to work with businesses that have access to skilled, talented graduates and there's access to sensibly priced housing - all of this goes into making a place attractive.

Met Tower is a central and strategically located building, and its location within the city's innovation district formed an integral part of our decision to expand here. Its proximity to well-regarded academic institutions, including the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow City College, and Glasgow Caledonian University, meet our desire to work closely with local partners to drive the success of the tech sector in the city. And the building itself benefits from excellent public transport links, as well as an array of retail, leisure and culture outlets on its doorstep.

Combine this with the fact that everybody knows it and that so many people wish to see it brought back into use struck so many chords for us. Recycling existing buildings is something that Bruntwood has done for many years: take something that has arguably seen its economic life expire and give it another lease of life to make it relevant for now and into the future. It couldn't have been a better first building for us to buy in the city.

Rather than coming in and owning just one building, we want to build a local team, build our exposure to the market and put down roots. The growth potential that exists here is really attractive.

How do you hope Met Tower will attract the next generation of great Scottish tech companies?

Scotland is a scaling hub for tech businesses and, through discussion with some of the key stakeholders within the tech sector in the city, we know there's a lot of spin-outs from the universities and independently formed businesses that operate from a wide variety of locations.

Right now, there's limited options for these spinouts to grow and scale into that also gives them the additional support and access to networks that they need to succeed.

Our aim is for Met Tower to provide a home for businesses that are like-minded and face similar challenges. The support we can provide with events, networking and signposting to the initiatives that are already well established in the city can help businesses of all sizes with the challenges they face. The development will provide somewhere for people to gather, work, share experiences and hopefully collaborate on projects, while supporting the work that the innovation district is already doing.

What has been the response in reaction to the announcement by stakeholders, and the tech and digital community?

The feedback we've had from stakeholder organisations has been overwhelmingly positive. We're looking forward to working in conjunction with, not duplicating what's already being done. People are already delivering great support, so we're assessing who's doing what, what gaps exist and how we can plug them and work effectively with partner organisations.

Whilst it's a big city, the fact that the network and collaboration is so strong makes it very navigable. The maxim of 'it's good to do business with people that you like' really prevails.

What prompted the decision to double Bruntwood SciTech's investment at Met Tower?

We knew when we acquired the building that there was planning already granted for a commercial building at the rear of Met Tower.

We want to develop a real pipeline here and want to be able to deliver additional space as quickly as possible so that once we've got momentum we don't lose it.

Met Tower works well to deliver start up space e.g. coworking and serviced customers, but the medium/large space for larger SMEs and corporates can be developed in the second tower, enabling businesses to startup and scale in one location.

How does Bruntwood SciTech plan on making sure Met Tower aligns with Bruntwood's Net Zero ambitions?

We're employing all the knowledge and experience that we've had in spending 40 years recycling buildings into our development of Met Tower.

In recycling the building, we go a long way in delivering our sustainability objectives, and the brief was set early to ensure the building is Net Zero in operation once complete.

The team has also been set the challenge to reduce the embodied carbon as much as possible, and we are working closely with the local authority to use high quality, locally sourced materials in order to get longevity of life cycle into the building.

Technological advances also continue to be made which means from a Net Zero and operational perspective things continue to improve. For example, by smart enabling the building we can work with customers to monitor and reduce their energy consumption. This means we can do our part as the property provider but also help our customers become as energy efficient as possible.

From your own perspective, what does 'success' look like in Met Tower and for Bruntwood SciTech in Glasgow?

We want to deliver a building that the city is proud of. It's not a building we can lay claim to; we're a custodian of it. But it has such an impact on the city skyline, we want all the key stakeholders in the city and the public at large to say that we've delivered something fitting.

We'd like Alasdair Gunn and everyone at the Glasgow City Innovation District to say that we've achieved what we said we would, in terms of it being a natural home for tech within the city. Our aim is for Met Tower to be the natural choice for businesses to set themselves up for success.

What's next for Bruntwood SciTech in Scotland? What are the ambitions?

For Bruntwood SciTech in Glasgow, Met Tower is hopefully just the start of the story for us. We'd love to establish ourselves here, working in partnership with other key stakeholders and institutions to deliver more and become a key part of the city - not just the tech ecosystem.

We want to put real roots down in Glasgow and ensure we're involved in driving its potential as much as we can.



Accelerating the growth of life sciences at Alderley Park

Bruntwood SciTech celebrated a number of milestone developments at its Alderley Park campus in Cheshire in 2022.

The Park is home to 4500 people and over 250 science and technology businesses that are currently scaling and growing. To support this, further investments are being made into the development of world-leading laboratory and office space.

A new £20m lab redevelopment

In June, a £20m redevelopment of 86,000 sq ft of labs was completed. Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership provided £4m to the redevelopment scheme, further cementing Alderley Park as one of the UK's leading science and technology campuses.

As part of Alderley Park's £247m masterplan, the existing lab spaces have been redeveloped to create high-specification biology and chemistry containment level two (CL2) laboratory suites. The development also includes write-up, breakout and presentation spaces specifically designed to further inspire collaboration between companies and colleagues, enabling the natural collision of ideas.

The investment provides a boost for drug discovery firms, including those combating infectious diseases and cancer research.



"The life sciences sector has seen major growth in the UK over the last decade, with the UK now seeing a significant lack of available lab space, which has the potential to hamper further growth if supply is not boosted. It is vital that we play our role in supporting investment into specialist infrastructure, unlocking growth to meet this growing demand, and keeping knowledge and innovation within the UK, which is what we are doing at Alderley Park and at our other life science campuses across the UK's regions."

"Alderley Park is already a world-leading campus for science and technology and a key location for the North's thriving life sciences sector. Investing in its future will keep this facility, and its businesses, at the forefront of regional, national and international innovation."

– Dr. Kath Mackay, Director of Life Sciences, Bruntwood SciTech.



Pictured: Proposed new builds and public realm space at Alderley Park

Looking ahead to ambitious new life science and tech developments

Following extensive public consultation, plans for the next phase of Alderley Park's masterplan development have been submitted; including the plan to deliver two new buildings for lab and office space totalling 200,000 sq ft.

Subject to planning consent, 100,000 sq ft of new world-leading CL2 lab space will be created at the first building. Spanning five floors, it will be suitable for both chemistry and biology uses, as well as associated write-up space. Meanwhile, the new office building will provide 100,000 sq ft of dynamic and innovative workspace across six floors, creating a collaborative environment where tech and innovative businesses can co-locate together.

The new space will accommodate up to 1,600 new science and tech jobs in the region as the new developments cater for life sciences, technology and healthcare companies, particularly those working in drug discovery and development, diagnostics, digital health and AI sectors.

This will be the first newly built commercial space to be delivered since acquiring the site in 2014. The new office building will include flexible meeting rooms, lounge areas, an impressive outdoor terrace and a hospitality offering, providing new amenities for all of the Alderley Park community.

A booming community

2022 saw the Park's science and tech ecosystem continue to flourish with Sai Life Sciences expanding four-fold and Charles River launching a brand new 17,000 sq ft high-specification lab facility set to bolster UK cell and gene therapy manufacturing capability.

Reflecting ambitions to tap into the North West's growing digital economy, Glasshouse welcomed German software giant SAP, as they opened their new northern hub.

Bruntwood SciTech was proud to partner with Shoosmiths to host the inaugural LandAid North West 10K at Alderley Park. The event saw over 200 property professionals raise over £12,000 to support and tackle youth homelessness, whilst enjoying the Park's woodland running trails.

Pictured: LandAid North West 10K 2022



£21m hub for industry 4.0 completes

Beginning development in December 2020, the £21m Base building at Manchester Science Park completed in July.

Another huge step forward in Bruntwood SciTech's one million sq ft masterplan for the Park, Base was specifically designed both for companies working in the high growth, Industry 4.0 tech arena, as well as those moulding and training the next generation of highly skilled, specialist talent to support such businesses.

The construction of Base took place during one of the toughest economic and uncertain periods of our time, at the height of the pandemic. *"It's testament to the resilience and sheer commitment of our internal project team, Caddick Construction, and the wider contractor team that we completed the build almost to the same timings that we intended when the building was designed, long before the pandemic began,"* said Bradley Topps, Bruntwood SciTech's Commercial Director.

Base will play a significant role in supporting the growth of Manchester's knowledge economy as a specialist hub in the city, building on the region's internationally recognised tech and manufacturing cluster. It offers a mix of office space and dedicated makerspace workshop for the prototyping of new, or modifying existing products.

Within the building, an expansive welcome area with breakout space and informal meeting areas provides a great first impression; meeting rooms including a 24 person boardroom boost productivity and collaboration; and secure cycle storage, a sports kit drying room, showers and lockers make an active commute or breaktime simple. This is topped off by a 165 person indoor/outdoor roof terrace event space with panoramic views across Manchester city centre and its innovation district.

Sustainability has been a key part of the redevelopment of Base, incorporating a number of measures to enable the building to operate at Net Zero Carbon across common areas. PV solar power is expected to generate around 114 MWh of electricity per year, and a hybrid heating and cooling system will significantly reduce refrigerant gases. The implementations will result in far lower emissions and optimised energy consumption.

Furthermore, over 360sq m of carpet from the former Base building has been recycled, with 60% being reused as flooring finishes and the remainder has been turned into useful energy through a waste-to-energy facility. Together, these measures have reduced the building's carbon footprint by 22% and supported the building in achieving an EPC A rating.

Pedestrians using the links through the campus to Oxford Road are also seeing positive changes. As part of the investment in the external landscaping, the route now includes 50 new trees, wild grasses, bird nest boxes and below-ground beehives. A huge benefit to people, nature and the environment.



INTERVIEW

The rise of LegalTech in Leeds

Katherine Megson, Innovation Events & Programme Manager - Leeds

This year, Bruntwood SciTech committed to supporting the growth of one of Leeds and West Yorkshire's most exciting subsectors, LegalTech. Designed and delivered by Whitecap Consulting, a strategy consultancy headquartered in Leeds, the 'LegalTech in Leeds' initiative was developed to help drive digital adoption, improve access to legal services, and support entrepreneurs seeking to work in LegalTech.

The initiative has been developed as a result of a number of public-private partnerships between Whitecap Consulting, Bruntwood SciTech, Leeds City Council, rradar, Barclays, Leeds Law Society and a host of organisations working in the legal and digital sectors.

We sat down with Bruntwood SciTech's Innovation Events & Programme Manager in Leeds to discover more about Leeds as a growing hub for tech startups, the rise of LegalTech and what the future holds for it going forward.

Tech start-ups and scaleups in Leeds have raised £288m already in 2022, an increase of 88% on 2021's figures (£153m), according to data from Dealroom analysed by the UK's Digital Economy Council - why do you think this is?

A variety of reasons. Leeds is a great place to start or grow a business for the obvious reasons, including skills, networks and funding. There's no argument the funding and inward investment into the region has grown rapidly over the past year or two. The universities have a large part to play in this success.

Innovation activity tends to rely on three key factors from a university: graduate talent, faculty knowledge and R&D projects, which generally include some form of grant funding. When you get the academic trifecta, plus private funding and network support, you're on to something.

I think Leeds is starting to get that right. We still have a way to go, including improving our spin-out, and spin-in activity, but we're improving year on year.





LegalTech in particular is a growing sector in the region, what's driving this?

It's an interesting one. I feel like the answer is two-fold and can be related to the classic push/pull innovation process.

On one hand, you have digital companies self-identifying as potential players in the LegalTech market, and on the other you have stakeholders who see the potential for that sector, and not enough activity. The latter is a really interesting group of people, who have come together to galvanise activity through events, hackathons, and knowledge transfer.

This resulted in the creation of the LegalTech in Leeds initiative, which Bruntwood SciTech is a key strategic partner in. The intention is to increase activity within the LegalTech space. Leeds has the highest number of professional services outside London, as well as the fastest growing digital economy. It makes sense for the right arm to talk to the left, and the LegalTech in Leeds initiative is how we see this activity increasing.

What makes Leeds such a hotspot for LegalTech?

Leeds has a huge cluster of Law Firms. It also has one of the largest groupings of digital transformation and tech companies, and consultancies. LegalTech, unlike LawTech, is underpinned by the technologies lawyers use to improve productivity and streamline processes. In order to achieve success in technology implementation, law firms require a tangible and trusted relationship with a technology provider. This is where LegalTech in Leeds plays an integral part; at the centre of the initiative is a joined up public and private ambition to increase LegalTech activity within the region.

What does the future look like for Leeds' digital and tech sector?

Growth. We are on the cusp of a tremendous period of growth. Key sectors of growth have been identified, and are being supported by public and private stakeholders.

Since the arrival of Channel 4's headquarters, we have seen a huge increase of marketing agencies and creative businesses flock to the city.

The LegalTech in Leeds activity is sure to increase visibility and funding into this sector.

Spotlight on: Female Founders

This year saw the launch of Bruntwood SciTech's Female Founders Incubator at Platform in Leeds. Female Entrepreneurs have been underrepresented and under supported for years, an area in which Bruntwood SciTech is perfectly positioned to have a positive impact. The programme includes business support, mentoring, peer-2-peer sessions and desk space worth £5,000 per founder.

One month into the programme, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

'We are committed to supporting female founders with this sustainable programme. The objective is to launch the incubator in Circle Square in 2023, creating a Female Founders Forum across the North. A much needed piece of activity to improve diversity within the entrepreneurial space.'

– Deb Hetherington, Head of Innovation Services, North of England



The future vision for Melbourn Science Park unfolds



Establishing innovation support in Cambridgeshire

In 2022, Melbourn Science Park became a member of Cambridge Ahead, a group of 50 businesses instrumental in influencing the successful and sustainable growth of Cambridge and its region in the long-term by addressing issues such as transport.

The first phase of 'LifeSpace', Melbourn Science Park's growth programme launched in 2022 in collaboration with TTP, seeks to establish a new community of TechBio innovators in the Region. This will be followed up with a series of events and workshops in the coming year to support the operational, commercial and technology challenges faced by businesses in this emerging new sector.

Bruntwood SciTech also collaborated with BioTech Bikers to host a 30 person strong cycle tour across all the Cambridgeshire science parks, helping establish Bruntwood SciTech as a key member of the regional science and tech community.

This year, a connection with Cambridge University and Anglia Ruskin University careers services has been established to link with local graduate talent and potential STEM apprenticeships and provide an avenue of opportunity for businesses on the Park requiring apprenticeships and graduate placements.

In April, Bruntwood SciTech took full operational control of Melbourn Science Park, an 180,000 sq ft site in Cambridgeshire acquired in 2020. The creation of an exciting 10 year masterplan is underway, with consultations held towards to the end of 2022, which will lead to its unveiling and submission in 2023. The Park will offer world class science and tech space, facilities and amenities for up to 120 businesses.

Bruntwood SciTech's vision for the Park is to be a globally recognised world class campus for converging science and tech applications such as 'TechBio'; where new ventures scale and mature enterprises innovate to improve the future of human health.

It will be an inspiring place to work and socialise, based on high quality sustainable landscaping and building design that promotes inclusivity and wellbeing for both those who work on the campus and the wider local community.

Community Engagement

A calendar of community events has been hosted throughout 2022, driving engagement and a sense of inclusivity with all those close to the site. Highlights include the Summer BBQ networking event, complete with fairground rides, monthly Board Games and Beers nights, a creativity table for World Mental Health Day, and a Christmas market featuring stalls hosted by local artisans.

Another community highlight for Melbourn is the youth engagement project, which launched in Autumn 2022. Bruntwood SciTech partnered with the urban designers at Cambridgeshire Council Planning team to run a furniture design competition for local primary school children. 60 pupils from Year 5 at Melbourn Primary School were invited for a tour of the Park and then taken to an onsite landscape architecture workshop to help inspire their design process.

Five of the pupils' creations were selected to be fully realised into working street furniture, which will be added to the campus during its redevelopment for the whole of Melbourn's community to enjoy.

Jamie Clyde, Bruntwood SciTech's Director for the Southern Region said:

"This is a really exciting project. Not only are the pupils involved in a creative design process at Melbourn Science Park, they gain an insight into STEM careers and future job opportunities that could lie ahead for them in their own village. With inspirational leadership from Dr Bonnie Kwok, the Principal Urban Designer from Cambridgeshire Council's Planning team, and landscape architect Sarah Harris from Planit IT Limited, the children are learning to appreciate that they can aspire to whatever they choose."



Supporting biodiversity and partnership

In April, Bruntwood SciTech CEO Kate Lawlor and Director for the Southern Region, Jamie Clyde, took part in a joint tree planting ceremony with TTP's CEO, Sam Hyde, to signify the new partnership with TTP which seeks to bring a new life sciences incubator to Melbourn.

Central to the design of the new Masterplan for the site is to increase the amount of greenspace and to enhance biodiversity in order to create an environment around the new labs and office spaces that will attract and inspire talent, as well as providing a new amenity for the local village residents.

Unify Energy

Unify Energy is bringing a fresh approach to commercial energy supply for landlords, managing agents, and tenants in the UK.

Unify Energy

More than just an energy supplier

Unify Energy is bringing a fresh approach to commercial energy supply for owners and operators of commercial buildings. Whether it's a single suite, industrial unit, or a portfolio of commercial buildings, we're more than just an energy supplier, we're your Energy business partner.

We're striving to be different and tackling industry problems that have long gone overlooked, like the relationship between landlords and the occupiers that are connected to the landlords' energy supply. In multi-tenanted commercial buildings, Unify Energy is the first regulated supplier

to go beyond the main meter and contract directly with a landlord's occupiers, providing an end-to-end building solution. This gives occupiers direct access to a supplier even if they are on a sub-meter or sq ft split. We can issue proper energy bills and provide direct first line support to all customers. For landlords, this eliminates the burden and cost of trying to provide this service in house.



Braving the worst Energy crisis in History!

In our second full year of operation as Unify Energy we continued to develop the business despite the challenging times that 2022 brought for the energy sector and its customers. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was the catalyst for multiple market events creating prolonged volatility and energy security risk. The events of 2022 have further highlighted an overdependence globally on fossil fuels; it is critical that we tackle this as a society.

Whilst the Energy crisis impacted us like the rest of the market, we were able to minimise that impact by relying on the strong foundation that we built through investment in systems, processes and people. Customers will have seen many suppliers exit market over the past few years but Unify Energy is here to stay.

The future of good Energy supply is more than just the cost per unit and we continue to invest resources in areas that support our customers to evolve their Energy strategy. Last year Unify Energy sourced Bruntwood's Kirk Hill Wind farm acquisition where Bruntwood purchased 42.4% share in the project. We continue to work as a core part of the delivery team and we will ultimately sleeve Kirk Hill's renewable energy to Bruntwood buildings in early 2024. Our continued partnership with Ripple

Energy will bring future renewable projects for our customers, where Unify Energy is able to sleeve renewable, customer owned Energy with grid supply in a transparent and flexible way.

"Many suppliers have exited the market over the past few years but Unify Energy is here to stay"

When the Government introduced financial support for businesses in the face of escalating energy costs, our new systems provided a robust environment to respond to the changes in tariffs and invoicing required by the scheme. We're proud to be one of very few suppliers who managed to implement discounts on invoices in the tight timescales outlined. Additionally, our unique approach to sub-metered customers means that even customers without their own main meter received the government-funded energy discount directly from us, which is completely unique to Unify Energy.



Looking forward....

In a market that traditionally lacks differentiation Unify Energy is committed to bringing its unique products and services to more customers as we continue to grow. We're extremely proud of the level of customer service we offer in a market where the regulator regularly highlights standards of customer service as problematic. As we entered 2023 the wholesale cost of Energy eased and prices are now at their lowest since the Ukrainian invasion. The Government has recently announced a substantial withdrawal of Energy bill support originally introduced via the EBRs scheme and now is the time for businesses to think about their Energy strategy for the coming years. Price is an important factor for customers to consider but sourcing renewable Energy and reducing Energy intensity must also be top of mind and Unify Energy is uniquely positioned to support customers through this journey, we're more than just an Energy supplier - we're your Business Energy partner.



Financial Statement

– Kevin Crotty, Chief Financial Officer

It is my great pleasure against a backdrop of what feels like near permanent economic and political crisis, to present yet another strong set of numbers for the Bruntwood Group.

We are reporting Profit Before Tax of £75.2m, up from £44.9m in 2021 and the second highest in our history. In addition, our balance sheet Net Worth has increased to £671.5m (a 10.7% increase).

Whereas operating profit plus revaluation from our 100% owned, predominantly stable investment portfolio was broadly flat year on year, the majority of the increase arose from the performance of our Bruntwood SciTech Joint Venture with Legal & General. Overall, profit from our share in Joint Ventures increased from £3.9m to £33.7m. This was largely due to strong revaluation performance, particularly through the realisation of development profit, as the first two phases of Circle Square completed and fully let up and Alderley Park became income generative following its transition from a largely vacant asset following the decant of its previous owner occupier, to a thriving multi-let science and technology asset.

Bruntwood group property under ownership (Group plus 50% JV's) at the year now stands at precisely £2.0bn, (up by £200m) as we invested a further £147m of capital, realised revaluation gains of £153m and made non-core disposals of £72m. The non-core disposals predominantly consisting of the compulsory purchase of Square One by Manchester Piccadilly station to

make way for HS2 and £14m of further housing development land at Alderley Park to help fund the overall site masterplan.

Loan to value (our net debt outstanding as a percentage of our property ownership) including our 50% share of Joint Ventures ended the year at 47.8% (compared to 50.2% in 2021) and on our 100% owned business 54.6% (2021 – 54.8%). It is still very much our intention to bring group loan to value down in the short to medium term and we are currently actively working on our options to fund the next phase of growth of the group. In last year's report I mentioned that we had refinanced £276m of debt on 15 year terms with Aviva, incurring £7.9m of penalties to break the previous loan early so that we could lock in historically low gilt rates. With the increase in interest rates that we have now seen, this loan will provide the group with significantly below market interest rates for many years to come. At current market interest rates, if the locked in interest rate was marked-to-market and valued on our balance sheet it would have a value of approximately £70m.

We have recently extended our £225m medium term loan out to March 2023 and also have terms agreed with our banks for the longer term which we will enact following our growth funding review. In the meantime values could fall by up to 30% before any of our Loan to Value covenants are threatened. Due to the rise in interest rates we have negotiated Interest Cover (ICR) covenants which are more in line with the current market following years of hyper low interest rates. Bruntwood is proud that it has never breached an agreed covenant in its history.

We remain very very grateful to all of our banks for their continued strong support.

Brexit, Covid, the war in Ukraine and the resulting cost of living crisis have meant that we have not had a decent period of stability for some time. Despite this, we believe that the product that we have created and the high growth customers that we are attracting as we embrace and adapt to new ways of working, will position us well against whatever is thrown at us. Occupational levels in our stable investment portfolio have held up well, our new developments have let quickly and our co-working and serviced offices are at record levels of occupancy.

The cost of living crisis will create its challenges. At the time of writing the Bank of England has raised base rates to 3.75% from its lows of 0.25% but fuel prices are now falling which in turn has led to the expectation that inflation will halve in the 2nd half of the year. This in turn has led to the expectation that there is perhaps only one or two more

quarter point interest rate rises to come. This is compared to the chaos that ensued post the Truss / Kwarteng budget when the market was predicting peak rates of c6%.

I have no doubt that there will be tricky economic times ahead, but at the moment there is a sense of optimism that the worst of what was predicted may well be avoided and growth will return in the latter half of 2024 / early 2025. Whereas we know that valuations cooled slightly between September 2022 (as reported here) and December 2022, there are signs that they have now re-stabilised.

Prime property yields still offer a sensible premium to underlying gilt rates and at some point it is likely that the inflation that we have seen in the economy (which has fed through to build costs) will feed through to rental levels.

We look forward to the coming year with optimism due to the strong underlying proposition that we have created.

Below: Kevin Crotty, Chief Financial Officer.



Key stats

£672m

SHAREHOLDERS FUNDS UP 10.7%

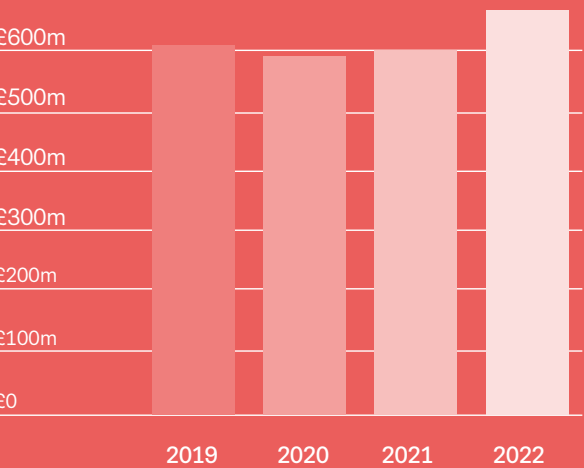
47.8%

GEARING DOWN FROM 50.2%*

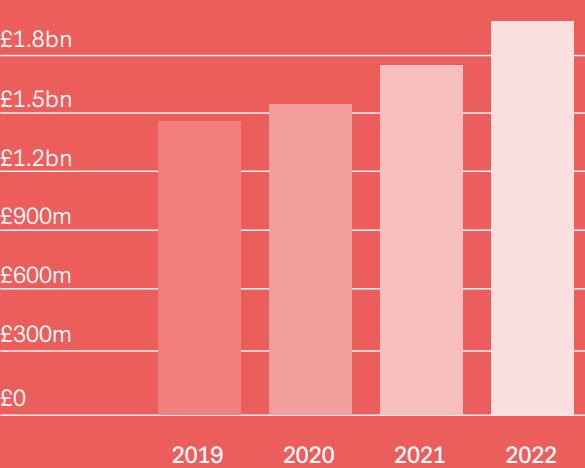
*including our share of Brunwtodd SciTech

Main financial performance metrics

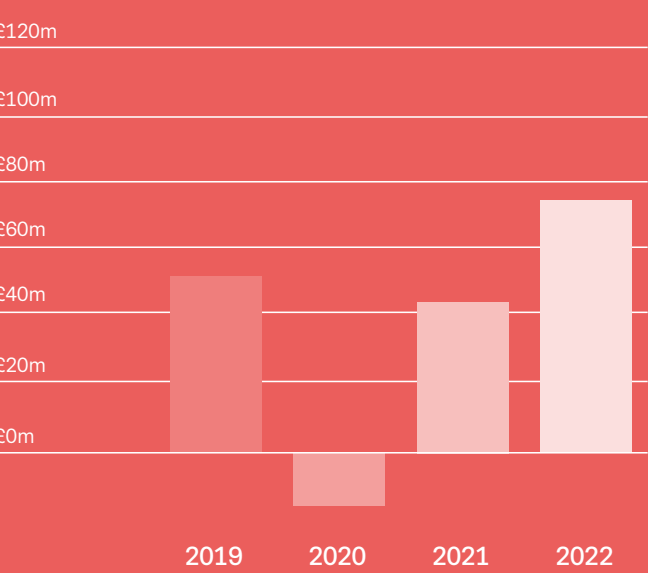
Shareholders funds Growth: 3%



Fixed assets under management*



Profit before tax: 337.2%



Balance sheet

Year ended 30 september 2022	2022	2021
	£000	£000
FIXED ASSETS		
Intangible assets	7	22
Tangible assets	1,051,587	1,039,249
- Investment in Joint Ventures	247,974	
- Investment in Joint Ventures	6,622	191,613
	1,306,120	1,230,884
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors: amounts receivable within one year	64,672	69,621
Debtors: amounts receivable after more than one year	22,432	23,427
Cash at bank and in hand	12,932	15,545
	100,036	108,593
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	(98,654)	(100,351)
Net current assets/(liabilities)	1,382	8,243
Total assets less current liabilities	1,307,502	1,239,127
Creditors: amounts falling due after more tha one year	(588,566)	(585,899)
Provisions for liabilities	(47,431)	(46,725)
Net assets	671,505	606,502
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Called up share capital	50,680	50,652
Share premium	1,844	1,736
Capital redemption reserve	11,580	11,580
Other reserve	(32,841)	(32,841)
Profit and loss account	640,242	557,499
Shareholder's funds	671,505	606,502

Profit and loss account

Year ended 30 september 2022	2022	2021
	£000	£000
Turnover	142,149	122,563
Cost of sales	(79,534)	(63,556)
Gross profit	62,885	59,007
Administrative expenses	(31,779)	(26,530)
Operating profit	31,086	32,477
Share of results of joint ventures	33,727	3,888
Revaluation gains	35,726	(39,722)
Other exceptional loss	(2,336)	(7,944)
Profit on property sales	672	70
Profit before interest and tax	98,875	68,213
Net interest payable	(23,641)	(23,821)
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation	44,862	(23,351)
Tax credit /(charge) on profit on ordinary activities	(2,351)	(23,121)
Profit for the financial year	72,883	21,741

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