

COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE FIRST:

- The voice of professionals in Coventry & Warwickshire
- Developing relationships that grow business
- Events that provide valuable business insights

A successful FirstPro, a wonderful celebration of the region's young talent and an expanding events programme; a packed year for Coventry & Warwickshire First.

Reflecting on his year in office as Chair of Coventry & Warwickshire First, Michael Durkin said: "FirstPro is always the highlight of the year and 2017 was no exception. Sarah Perry of Wright Hassall was a worthy overall winner and we were delighted to raise £6,000 for the Heart of England Community Foundation.

"Our events programme has thrived, with a new board committee taking on responsibility for initiating visits to a range of quirky and interesting venues and businesses in the region. We've welcomed a combined total of over 500 business people!

"This year also saw a change in our secretariat. We were delighted to appoint business development specialist, Lorraine Francis, and are looking forward to the growth of Coventry & Warwickshire First under her stewardship."

In October, communication specialist, Cathy Connan took over as Chair.

"I am looking forward to an exciting year," she said. "We are refreshing FirstPro, moving to a new venue, Coombe Abbey, and introducing new categories.

"With Coventry BID on board as headline sponsor, YoungPro 2018 was successfully launched in October; the category winners will be announced in January at a Gala Reception. We have also introduced a programme of themed dinners; the first took place in November and focused on inward investment and development in the region.

Cathy is being supported during the year by Vice Chair, James Oliver, Relationship Manager at Yorkshire Bank.



Michael Durkin (Outgoing Chair), Cathy Connan (Incoming Chair) and James Oliver (Incoming Vice Chair)



Trish Willetts (Coventry BID), Vangeya Murphy (YoungPro 2017) and Holly Brain (Chair of the Young Professionals Network) at the launch of YoungPro 2018 at Mallery Court.



Sarah Perry Announced as Winner of FirstPro 2017

Always the highlight of the Coventry & Warwickshire First Year, FirstPro was a sell-out.

The purpose of FirstPro is to recognise the professional and financial services talent in the region and broadcast to local, regional and national businesses that Coventry and Warwickshire is home to first class professional services advice.

This year's winner – Sarah Perry, Managing Partner of Wright Hassall Solicitors – embodies this philosophy. As one of only eight female managing partners of law firms in England, Sarah has been identified as a 'Hot 100' lawyer by the industry leading publication, The Lawyer.

The audience also threw its support behind Coventry's bid for City of Culture!



From the Twisted Barrel Brewery to behind the scenes at Hatton Country World

First Friday is a great opportunity to meet and get to know others in the sector at the same time as finding out about a local business. As well as the Twisted Barrel Brewery and Hatton Country World, we've been to Geberit, Audley Binswood, the Herbert Art Gallery, Drapers Bar & Kitchen, Coventry University and the Belgrade.

Get in touch if you have a great idea for a First Friday visit.

Information and insight at our Quarterly Breakfasts

Our regular quarterly breakfasts give members insight into key initiatives in the region and the chance to speak directly to influencers. This year the Quarterly Breakfasts have included Michael Mogan of Coventry 2021 explaining how local businesses could give their support to the Bid for City of Culture and Jane Hytch of Imagineer Productions talking about her plans for the Daimler Powerhouse.



Introducing YoungPro

2017 saw the inaugural YoungPro, a celebration of the incredible talent amongst the next generation of leaders in the region's professional services community.

The winners - Aimee Postle (Prova PR) (Business Services), Tom Meredith (MarchantCain) (Finance) and Vangeya Murphy (Shakespeare Martineau) (Legal) – were announced at the gala reception held at St Mary's Guildhall in January. They set the standard for future years.



An exciting 2018 in prospect

- **YoungPro 2018** takes place in January: nominations are open
- **FirstPro 2018** is moving to Coombe Abbey!
- **New categories** will provide a platform for celebrating the great work completed in the region.
- **Network at First Fridays.** Events are being planned for Penso Consulting, Castel Froma and Ardencote Spa.
- **Our Quarterly Breakfast** programme continues with a briefing from Dick Elsy, CEO of High Value Manufacturing Catapult.
- **Private dinners.** We will continue our programme of private dinners, which began in November with one focused on inward investment.
- We will bring the region's female leaders together to share their expertise with the next generation of female leaders on **International Women's Day.**

We are planning plenty of other events and activities; watch the website (www.coventryfirst.co.uk) for more information.

A Vibrant Young Professionals Network

With regular social gatherings, fundraising events and the annual quiz, the Young Professionals Network continues to be an exciting environment in which to develop your career while building long lasting friendships.

