

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

## Welcome from our Chair Kristy Ainge

2023 has been a busy year. Led by John Rimmer it got off to a flying start with all the First Friday lunches at capacity, and many with a waiting list. John handed over to Alister Foye who hosted the third annual and very popular quiz, with Kristy Ainge recently taking over as Chair to see us into the new year.

Kristy said "I am delighted to have taken over as Chair having served a short stint as Vice Chair. I'm a Senior Associate, Solicitor Advocate at Ladders LLP and have worked in Coventry and Warwickshire for the past 9 years. I have been involved in the organisation for many of those years, it's a great network of friendly people who are keen to promote and show what a great place it is to work and do business.

Our events programme has been busier than ever. We recently re-introduced the very popular cross-sector dinners with a theme of AI and professional services. Judging by both the feedback and speed at which all the places sold out, I'm sure this will be a subject we'll return to in 2024 in addition to dinners on other topical and relevant themes. We're hosting a Business Breakfast in January and I'm also excited to be looking at a new summer event (watch this space) - and due to the success of the now annual quizzes - another quiz!

I am passionate about the First Pro awards, so we will be looking into the feasibility of bringing this back into the calendar. I believe, having been involved previously, that it's an event which is very much missed. It would be a great profile raising for our sector in the region, particularly for promoting and rewarding the talent amongst our young professionals.

In signing off, I would like to thank my predecessors for creating the momentum that I will continue to build on, to our Board for their enthusiasm and active support and all our members who attended and made the First Friday networking lunch programme so successful in particular. I'm looking forward to what the future holds in store for Coventry & Warwickshire First and to a busy calendar of events and plenty more networking during 2024.

Yours



Kristy Ainge

## A busy year for our Young Professionals

It's been another great year for the Young Professionals network, with four events held this year. Attendances have been strong with great support from sponsors. The group's aim is to put on relaxed and friendly networking events for the next generation of movers and shakers in the professional world in Coventry and Warwickshire. We look forward to another great year in 2024.





## We focused on networking

From an online talk with Professor Trevor Williams, former chief economist of Lloyds Bank, to learning about the future of eSports at Warwick University and AI at a cross-sector dinner, to standing on the stage at HMV Empire it's been another year of eclectic venues and visits - 14 in total and with more planned in 2024.

We've visited Coventry Cathedral, heard the story (and tasted the rewards) of setting up the East Chase gin distillery and even had a beginner's lesson at Royal Leamington Spa Bowling Club. More members than ever before booked for our informal summer "First Pint" reception and annual quiz. We are grateful to the region's leading businesses for giving us privileged access behind the scenes as part of our core First Friday networking lunch programme, with particular thanks to Kite Packaging, Martin Brower UK and REE Auto.

If there is somewhere you would like to visit, or if you can introduce us to a potential venue that would be interested in hosting a First Friday lunch, please let us know by emailing [Lorraine@coventryfirst.co.uk](mailto:Lorraine@coventryfirst.co.uk).

