

2025 REVIEW

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

Welcome from our Chair, Simon Cossey

Having taken the reins at the beginning of the year, I am delighted to be supported by Handelsbanken's Brett Salisbury as Vice-Chair as we plan for an action-packed 2026. I would like to extend my thanks to all members, especially Martin Gibbs (Dafferns), who retired this year and passed the Treasurer's baton to Karen Keeling, whom we welcome to the Board.

Throughout 2025, we have seen our reach, profile and influence grow through the unwavering support of member firms. We have seen over 100 local professionals across member firms attend events, deepening their personal connections and building a bigger, better professional ecosystem along the way.

Special mentions go to Ian Flynn from Invest in Warwickshire and John Norton at Coventry City Council, who have been instrumental in securing company visits as part of the strong FDI the region enjoys. Notable visits include the Advanced Propulsion Centre with an Intellectual Property theme, Coventry's Very Light Railway, which combines the best of the region's manufacturing and battery technology, and 'The Unconventional Convention' where virtual reality meets psychometric profiling.

Our flagship cross-sector dinner with The Rt Hon Greg Clark, which focused on the Industrial Strategy and professional services across the region, was a sell-out and further demonstrates the value that Coventry & Warwickshire First brings to its professional membership.

In closing, our high-value events provide local links, ensure that we are plugged into business support networks and give members direct access to market insight. I look forward to welcoming existing and new members to events throughout 2026.

Yours,



Simon Cossey



Brett Salisbury and Simon Cossey



Board members

**Young Professionals update**

Our Young Professionals network events have been well attended again this year, led by Keely Hughes Private Client Manager at Dafferns, with grateful thanks to our event sponsors and committee for their help and support making them happen. The group will be hosting more networking events in 2026 for the next generation of professionals in Coventry and Warwickshire, watch this space for more news!



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From recycling to virtual reality, we've seen it all ...

Our First Friday networking lunches gave a glimpse into the future of self-driving vehicles, very light rail technology, and all things tyre-related at Bridgestone. An insight into recycling showed how AI technology is changing the face of waste management, and we saw, up close, how virtual reality can offer a new take on team building. We enjoyed visiting cultural gems, including Drapers' Hall, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, and the always-popular trip to Royal Leamington Spa Bowling Club. We also held a Breakfast Briefing with the Bank of England in the spring and the cross-sector dinner in November, which was at capacity, as Simon mentioned earlier. Our annual "First Pint" informal summer networking reception was the best-attended so far, with many new and younger faces, which we're keen to encourage, so we'll be hosting another similar, relaxed gathering in 2026.

If there are venues you'd like to visit or speakers you'd like to hear from, please pop us an email at Lorraine@coventryfirst.co.uk to help make our events programme as interesting, useful and enjoyable as possible!



See the events page of our website for more details and booking links www.coventryfirst.co.uk

