

COLMORE
LIFE



AUTUMN/WINTER 2025



*Enjoy autumn and winter
in your Business District*

THE PEOPLE AND PLACES MAKING COLMORE SPECIAL

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‘To truly thrive, we must lean into collaboration, sharpen our efficiency, and support one another with renewed purpose’

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2025 issue of Colmore Life magazine.

This year has flown by, and we’re immensely proud to see businesses in Colmore continue to grow and thrive.

In this edition, you can enjoy an overview of all things Christmas in Birmingham, updates on our latest public realm projects, and the latest business news from the city’s commercial heart. Our Big Interview highlights the delivery of Three Chamberlain Square, and you’ll also find out more about the fantastic events and exhibitions we’re hosting in the coming months.

Birmingham has lots to celebrate, and we’re committed to championing this vision.

2025 has undoubtedly tested our city’s resilience, demanded our adaptability, and reminded us of the power of unity. We know the coming months won’t be easy for our businesses. Economic pressures,

global uncertainties and the ever-evolving demands of our industries will continue to challenge us.

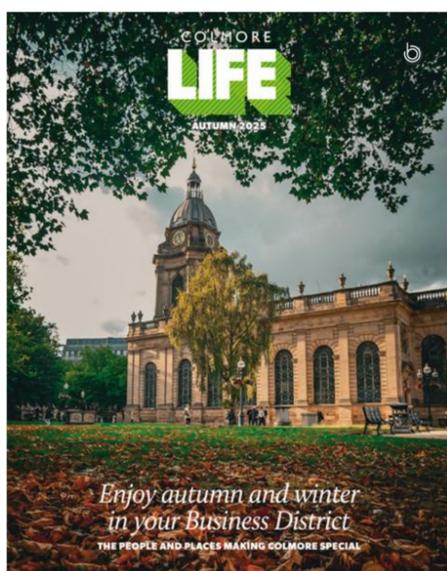
To truly thrive, we must lean into collaboration, sharpen our efficiency, and support one another with renewed purpose. The strength of our communities, workplaces and networks lie in our ability to communicate, coordinate and care.

Colmore BID is here to represent, support, and service the interests of all those invested in our part of the city, whether levy paying businesses, people who work, study or live here, or those visiting for business or enjoying our enriching culture and hospitality.

Please get in touch with us to find out how you can be involved in our work - we’re always interested to hear from those who want to drive forward a thriving city-centre environment.

On behalf of the entire team at Colmore BID, we wish you a safe and peaceful end to the year and bright, bold beginning to the next. We hope you enjoy this latest magazine issue.

**MICHELE WILBY,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
COLMORE BID**



On the cover: Beautiful Birmingham Cathedral, autumn 2025, by Stacey Barnfield

DID YOU KNOW? Colmore BID has produced a new digital magazine called **Colmore History** for you to discover the stories behind Colmore's streets and squares. Follow the QR code to read it or see page 11 for details.



A DAY IN THE DISTRICT

IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT FOR A MEETING? WHY NOT MAKE A DAY OF IT?

1 BREAKFAST

HOUSE OF CHAI

If you're looking for a breakfast spot that brings a little extra spice and flair to your morning, House of Chai is a great choice. Think buttery parathas, loaded breakfast wraps, creamy desi-style omelettes and "stacked toasties," all cooked fresh.

The Minories, Birmingham



2 EMAIL CATCH-UP

THE BMI

The historic Birmingham & Midland Institute on Margaret Street has been a space for creativity, culture and literary events for more than 150 years and they now have a new office space available to hire on short terms. The perfect space for a call or email.

Margaret Street, Birmingham

3 LUNCH

REGINA'S

Regina's brings a warm welcome and a menu full of flavour to the lunchtime crowd. Known for its fresh, seasonal dishes and relaxed atmosphere, it's the perfect spot to pause, refuel, and enjoy a taste of something special in the heart of the District.

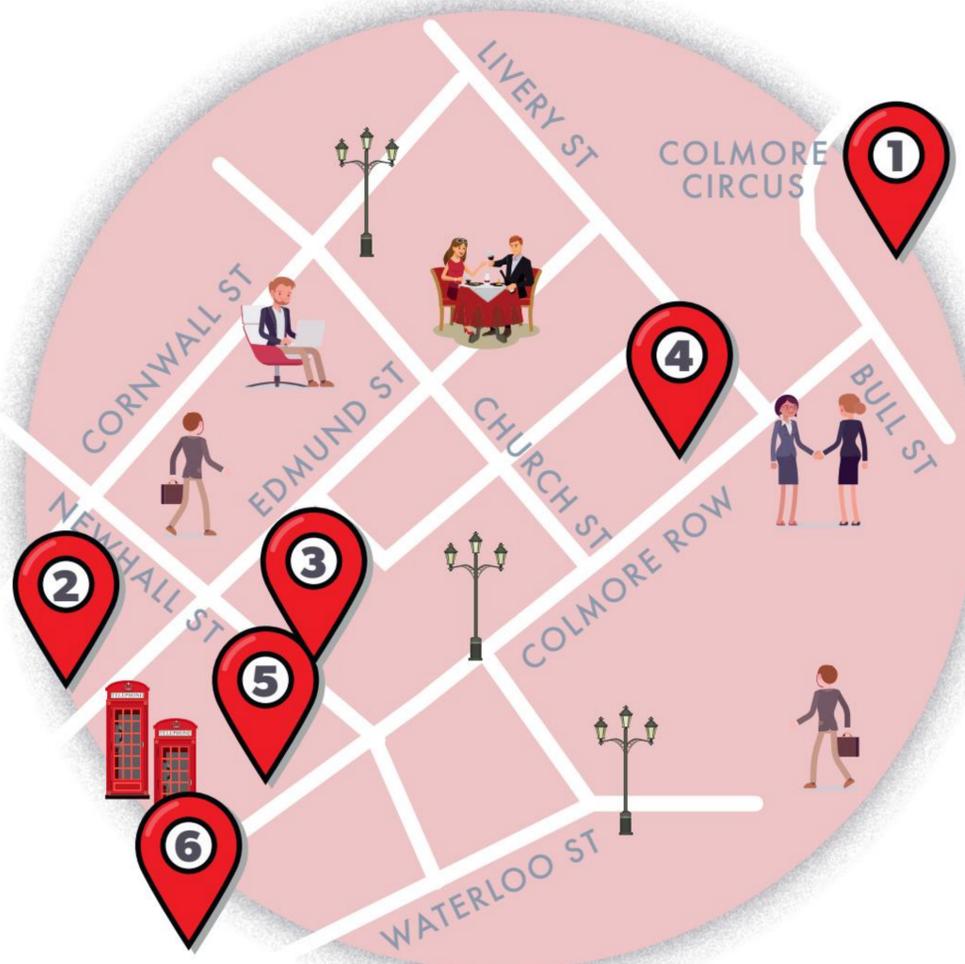
Newhall Street, Birmingham
See page 18

4 SHOPPING

CROCKETT & JONES

Elevate your wardrobe with a visit to Crockett & Jones, the renowned British shoemaker known for its craftsmanship and timeless style. Each pair is hand-finished, making this boutique a destination for professionals who value both quality and elegance.

Colmore Row, Birmingham



5 DINNER

24 STORIES

As evening falls, head up to 24 Stories (previously Orelle) for an award-winning dining experience with a view. Perched high above the city, this contemporary French restaurant pairs innovative dishes with Birmingham's skyline as a backdrop.

103 Colmore Row, Birmingham. See page 19

6 ONE FOR THE ROAD

THEATRIX

With creative cocktails, plush interiors and an atmosphere that balances glamour with fun, Theatrix is the ideal spot for a nightcap, or to keep the evening going a little longer.

Colmore Row/Victoria Square, Birmingham

‘Birmingham hasn’t had the easiest time, but I think there is a bright future ahead’



With 20 years’ experience shaping places and projects across Birmingham and beyond, **ALEX HOUSDEN** is one of the city’s most respected development managers. Now part of MEPC’s Paradise team, Alex is leading the delivery of Three Chamberlain Square – a striking new 190,000 sq ft office building set within the heart of the Business District.

Designed to achieve the highest standards of sustainability and workplace wellbeing, the Paradise scheme represents the next chapter in a two-million-square-foot masterplan that is transforming the city centre.

Having previously worked with AtkinsRéalis and Argent on major commercial, residential and transport projects, Alex brings a rare breadth of insight into how cities evolve. We sat down with him to talk about heritage, sustainability, workplace trends – and what it means to help shape Birmingham’s future.

Alex, you’ve been working in the built environment for 20 years – what first drew you to a career in development and the property sector?

In 2000, I spent a year in industry with Turner & Townsend in Manchester, where I gained some early experience

contributing in a small way to some major regeneration projects such as Manchester Piccadilly station, the Arndale Centre rebuild after the 1996 IRA bombing, and the Imperial War Museum of the North. That experience sparked something for me. I was drawn to the idea of projects with a clear beginning and end, driven by vision and purpose, and which leave a lasting impact. The idea of shaping real places that people use and enjoy, and that can help communities thrive, has stayed with me ever since.

You’re currently leading the delivery of Three Chamberlain Square at Paradise. What excites you most about this project, and what do you think it will add to the city?

The opportunity to lead a project like Three Chamberlain Square has been a real privilege and a standout moment in my career. It’s a striking building with a bold architectural identity, and I’ve seen first-hand the care, creativity and attention to detail that the whole design team has brought to it. What excites me most is how it connects into the wider Paradise masterplan, especially with the new public realm soon opening up a fresh link between Chamberlain Square and Paradise Street.

It’s a part of the city that’s coming back to life, and this building plays a key role in that. At its core, it’s a futureproofed, low-carbon workplace designed to

support modern ways of working. We hope it will become one of the most desirable places to work in Birmingham – not just because of how it looks, but because of how it feels to be in and around it.

Sustainability and environmental performance are increasingly at the forefront of new developments. What measures are being built into Three Chamberlain Square to ensure it is “best in class”?

Sustainability, wellbeing and a sense of place have been central to the project brief. We’ve achieved a BREEAM Outstanding rating, which in terms of sustainability places us in the top 1% of non-domestic buildings in the UK. We’ve also taken a ‘Design for Performance’ approach to the fabric and systems design, first pioneered over 20 years ago in Australian cities under the NABERS scheme, to optimise the building’s energy performance and measure it in a much more precise way than we’ve traditionally done in the UK. We’re targeting at least a NABERS 5 star rating, which will make our building one of the best performing buildings in the UK and this will be backed up by real and continuous data. This is really valuable to our tenants and investors.

You’ve worked on a wide range of schemes across commercial, residential, education, and transport. How does this

Big Interview

‘Occupiers are creating smart, highly desirable workplaces for their teams, and we have to support them to do so by ensuring we’re building to the best quality’

experience influence your approach to managing a complex project like Paradise?

I’ve been lucky to work on some really broad and diverse projects and you learn something new from everything. One thing that either follows me around – or perhaps I seek out – I’m not sure which way round it is – is complexity. Whether it’s helping relocate thousands of students around a university campus against the clock and on a shoestring budget, or helping rebuild one of the UK’s busiest railway stations around the passengers using it every day. You have to be extremely resilient and adaptable because you have to deal with uncertainty and change on an almost daily basis. The biggest lesson I’ve learnt is the value created by a strong team, with a clear vision set from the top and a culture of collaboration and trust.

What trends are you seeing in occupier demand for new office space in Birmingham, and how are you responding to changing workplace expectations post-pandemic?

There’s a clear shortage of grade A accommodation in Birmingham and we’re seeing a number of occupiers increasing their space required as the years pass since the pandemic. Flexibility, adaptability and amenity are all really important factors both in terms of the physical workplace but also in terms of leasing trends. Occupiers are creating smart, highly desirable workplaces for their teams, and we have to support them to do so by ensuring we’re building to the best quality, and making it as easy as we can for them to continue to innovate. The digital infrastructure and smart features of the building are critical to this, and need to be thought about from the start. Beyond the building, we think occupiers value part of being in a community such as Paradise which is safe, secure and brought to life by the placemaking activities happening every day.

The public realm around Three

Chamberlain Square looks exciting. Tell readers more about these plans.

We can’t wait to open up the new Ratcliff Passage, which will extend Chamberlain Square all the way to Paradise Street and will be finished in the same granite paving seen across the development, with 12 new trees and many places to sit, dwell and enjoy the surroundings. We are also restoring and bringing back the historic statues of Joseph Priestley and James Watt which have been in storage since 2015. James Watt will be relocated to his original home next to the Town Hall for the first time since the 1960s when he was relocated prior to the construction of the Central Library. It will be wonderful to see this space brought to life.

Looking back across your career so far, is there a project or moment that stands out as especially defining for you?

More than half of my career has been focused on the Paradise development and I am extremely lucky to have played a part in something so transformational. It’s hard to pick just one highlight but probably the proudest moment was



when we opened up Chamberlain Square at the end of Phase 1. That was a hugely challenging project which threw so many curveballs at us – ground conditions, utilities, contractor insolvency and a pandemic to name just a few! But the reception from the public returning to the city after lockdown to find two halves of the city opened up for the first time in years was overwhelmingly positive. It’s since become such a vibrant and loved centrepiece to the city, and that is incredibly rewarding for everybody involved.

And finally, what’s next? Beyond Three Chamberlain Square, what ambitions do you have for Paradise Birmingham and for your own journey in shaping the city’s future?

The final phase of Paradise is still to come, and I hope that with this we continue to evolve and build on the successes of the earlier phases, through the quality of the architecture and the new spaces and connections between the buildings. But what’s really exciting to see is the growth of the sense of community and connection here. There are several exciting initiatives happening between the occupiers such as the Paradise Unlocked schools programme, which is creating genuine social value and establishing long term partnerships with the wider community.

Birmingham hasn’t had the easiest time recently, but I think there is a bright future ahead – provided as a city we can find the will to consolidate around the opportunities brought by HS2, Smithfield and the regeneration of Digbeth, and maximise the economic successes of developments such as Paradise.

I am lucky to work with a fantastic team and I simply hope to continue to play my own small part in Birmingham’s regeneration and continue to learn from my colleagues.

The Lowdown

A year of community, care and commitment

AN UPDATE ON COLMORE BID'S ACTIVITY IN LADYWOOD

By Kelsey Dwyer, Partnerships and Events Manager at Colmore BID

One of the recent highlights is our annual Community Games, which saw 16 businesses across the District compete in sports day style challenges to be crowned Community Games champions. Thanks to our wonderful businesses, £1,200 was raised for the Ladywood Community Project from this year's competition.

Throughout the year, litter picking events helped keep Ladywood's streets clean. A huge thank you to all the volunteers that spared time to help us on our mission. These clean-ups aren't just about tidying up – they demonstrated our commitment to pride in place and showing that every corner of the community matters.

Another vital initiative is our school uniform donation scheme, which supports children with new uniforms ahead of the new school year, easing financial pressure for many families.

As we get into the full swing of the festive season, we're helping children and families to ensure no one is left without. Thanks to the generosity of our wonderful business community, 16 children received gifts and warm pyjamas this winter. The joy will continue at our upcoming Breakfast with Santa event, where local children are set to enjoy a warm meal, festive drink and a visit from Father Christmas himself. Big thanks to Dishoom for hosting for a third year.

Looking ahead, the future of Ladywood is set to change. St Joseph's homes, part of the Berkeley Group, has been appointed to lead the £2.2 billion regeneration of the Ladywood estate.

This 20-year project will see 70% of existing homes refurbished or replaced with new homes, across all tenures, to meet the housing demand in Birmingham and the wider area. The project is set to create 1,000 apprenticeships and 10,000 full-time



jobs. Birmingham City Council will continue to provide and manage services for residents and housing. St Joseph, as the developer, will work with the community to design and deliver the new homes, public spaces and infrastructure.

In a year marked by both challenge and change, we remain committed to working together with the community, especially during this period of significant transformation, to support those who need it most.

Email kelsey.dwyer@colmorebid.co.uk to find out more about Colmore BID's work in the local community.

Pictured: Colmore BID's Community Games, a local litter-pick and Christmas gifts courtesy of Albert's Schloss

Working Group Updates

NEW PROFESSIONALS WORKING GROUP SPOTLIGHT: SANTINA BUNTING

'It's a mix of brainstorming and thinking up fresh event formats'

Meet Santina, one of the enthusiastic and valued members of our New Professionals Working Group. This network brings together early career professionals from across Colmore to connect, collaborate and grow.

We sat down with Santina to hear her thoughts on being part of the network.

What inspired you to join the New Professionals Working Group?

Within my role at Arup, I was the Lead Early Career Rep so organised internal and external networking events because I am really passionate about enabling young professionals to have a space to network.

Because of this I first became involved with Colmore Business District after their Board Director Hannah Voogd reached out to me to co-host a networking event last Christmas. It was such a rewarding experience seeing people meet, share ideas, and build connections across industries. Afterwards, Hannah asked me about joining the New Professionals Working Group, and it was a perfect fit.

What does membership involve?

As a member, I attend working group meetings where we share ideas, plan upcoming events, and look for creative ways to bring early career professionals together. It's a



mix of brainstorming, collaboration and thinking up fresh event formats to making sure the details are in place to give people a great experience. I have attended several events that the group organised in the past and have always had a great time so it's nice to be on the other side of it contributing.

What does being part of this network mean to you personally and professionally?

Personally, it's incredibly fulfilling to see the positive impact our events have watching people make new connections. I also love working with new people. Kelsey, Hannah and the team at Colmore BID are so lovely and really do make you feel welcomed. Professionally, it's expanded my own network and allowed me to learn from peers in completely different

industries. It's also strengthened my organisational and event-planning skills, which are invaluable in my career journey.

How has this group helped you feel more connected and supported in the wider city?

This group has widened my connections into Birmingham's professional community. It's given me the chance to meet people I wouldn't otherwise have crossed paths with, to understand more about the city and District, and to feel like I'm actively contributing to its vibrancy.

Why would you encourage other New Professionals in Colmore to get involved?

Because it's so much more than just networking – it's about building genuine relationships, learning from others' experiences, and being part of a community that wants to see you succeed. Whether you're new to the city, looking to expand your professional circle, or just curious about what's happening outside your own industry, the New Professionals Working Group offers a welcoming space to connect, collaborate, and grow together.

To find out more, email New Professionals Working Group lead Hannah Voogd on hannah@hbd.co.uk

STRENGTHENING SAFETY ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Colmore BID's Safe & Sound Working Group continues to play a vital role in enhancing safety and wellbeing across the District. We have welcomed new staff to our Community Operations team, so make sure you say hello when you see them out and about.

We've proudly supported Operation Oceanlight, a multi-agency effort led by West Midlands Police to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Birmingham city centre. Together with partners including Birmingham City Council, British Transport Police, Paradise Birmingham, Bullring and Grand Central and Central BID, we're tackling anti-social behaviour in our streets. While we will work collectively to support members of the street community who are in need of help, we will not tolerate substance misuse, violence or aggressive behaviour and we work closely with partners to target serial offenders.

As winter approaches we remain committed to supporting vulnerable communities. We continue to partner with Change into Action, encouraging donations to help those experiencing homelessness via changeintoaction.org.uk.

In November, we'll be hosting a personal safety event at BDO LLP as part of the global 16 Days of Activism campaign.

Businesses can continue to access free safety workshops including Trauma Equipment Awareness, Personal Safety Awareness, and direct meetings with West Midlands Police.

Looking ahead, we're planning a Women's Safety Awareness event in Snow Hill Square and a Homelessness Summer in 2026.

Please email john-jo.vonjohnson@colmorebid.co.uk for more information about events and how you can get involved.

Christmas in Birmingham

Birmingham at Christmas 2025

will be a city alive with festivity. Whether you want glittering lights, sacred music, theatrical spectacle, or the simple joy of markets and family time, there's more than enough to fill the calendar. The perfect plan might be a mix: pop into a twilight market, catch a show, wander a light trail, maybe ride the Polar Express, and top it off with carols in the Cathedral.

FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET

Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market transforms Victoria Square and New Street into an expanse of wooden chalets, authentic German treats, and seasonal cheer. This Brummie tradition returns for its full run from Saturday 1 November through to Wednesday 24 December.

CHRISTMAS IN CATHEDRAL SQUARE CRAFT MARKET

From Friday 7 November to Wednesday 24 December 2025, more than 60 independent traders, local artists, makers and food & drink vendors assemble under the shadow of Birmingham Cathedral. The market opens daily, mostly from 11am into the evening, with extended hours at weekends.

BRUM'S CHRISTMAS REINDEER TRAIL

Central BID's Brum's Christmas Reindeer Trail returns for 2025 and is a festive must-do for families and art lovers alike. The trail features nine large, colourful reindeer sculptures – Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and of course Rudolph. They will be spread across city-centre locations such as Great Western Arcade, Piccadilly Arcade, Selfridges and Grand Central.

COLMORE CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON

Mark your calendar for 19 November 2025, when Church Street in Colmore Business District lights up for the



*Markets, lights
and a festive
atmosphere*

season. The evening runs from about 5.30pm, with lights switched on at 6pm, and continues until around 7.30pm. Expect festive vibes all evening: Santa and friends, hot drinks, special goodie bags for BID businesses, and speeches (Glynn Purnell among the special guests this year) to officially kick things off.

LUMINATE – WINTER LIGHT TRAIL AT BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

A spectacular trail of lights returns between 28 November 2025 and 1 January 2026, from 4pm to 10.30pm nightly. Wander along the 1.4km lit pathway through the gardens – expect

installations, music, atmosphere (just wrap up warm!). Tickets are required. Dogs (except guide or assistance dogs) are not allowed.

THE POLAR EXPRESS BY VINTAGE TRAINS

The Polar Express experience is back, transporting passengers into a storybook journey aboard vintage trains. It's perfect for families with younger children.

SLAVA'S SNOW SHOW AT THE ALEXANDRA THEATRE

Running 11–15 November 2025, Slava's Snow Show returns with its trademark dreamlike magic: indoor snowstorms,

For all of the latest activities and leisure and hospitality offers this festive period, visit [COLMOREBUSINESSDISTRICT.COM/PROJECTS/CHRISTMAS-IN-COLMORE](https://colmorebusinessdistrict.com/projects/christmas-in-colmore)



WHEN TO GO & TIPS

Early November is already beginning to fill up with events as markets open and shows begin. If you want to catch Slava's Snow Show or Sherlock Holmes, those run through November and into December.

Evenings matter: many outdoor events (light trails, markets) come alive after dark. Wrap up warm, wear good footwear.

Tickets in advance: especially for theatre shows, the Botanical Gardens trail, Polar Express, etc. Expect popular events to sell out.

Family-friendly vs adult palate: There's plenty of variety: slapstick theatrical shows, immersive trails, and contemplative concerts. Choose depending on what your group will enjoy.



surreal clowning, bubbles, cobwebs and dry ice.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS – BIRMINGHAM REP

A brand new festive mystery comedy with music, featuring Sherlock Holmes, Dr Watson, and original songs by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber. This world premiere runs from 14 November 2025 through 11 January 2026 at The Rep. It's aimed at a wide audience "for everyone aged 10 to 110", blending detective intrigue with seasonal cheer.

THE NUTCRACKER 2025

A ballet staple, Birmingham Royal

Ballet's The Nutcracker will once again take centre stage, offering that classical festive touch. The production combines beautiful choreography, music, and seasonal storytelling to enchant audiences of all ages.

ROBIN HOOD – BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

The ultimate sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza! You'll see TV's Gok Wan as Gok Scarlet and panto favourite Matt Slack as Robin Hood.

With dazzling costumes, spectacular scenery, laugh-out-loud comedy and plenty of audience participation, Robin Hood has all the magic of a perfect family pantomime.

CATHEDRAL CHOIR CONCERT – A FORETASTE OF CHRISTMAS

If you prefer something contemplative, or simply want to be moved by beautiful music, this is ideal. Located in Birmingham Cathedral, it offers choral harmony in the acoustics of stunning architecture – a chance to slow down and reflect on the season on Friday, November 7, from 7.00pm to 8.00pm.

STORYTIME WITH SANTA

A more gentle, very family-friendly option at ThinkTank Birmingham Science Museum: children can enjoy stories in festive settings with Santa, perfect for younger ones who may find bigger productions overwhelming.

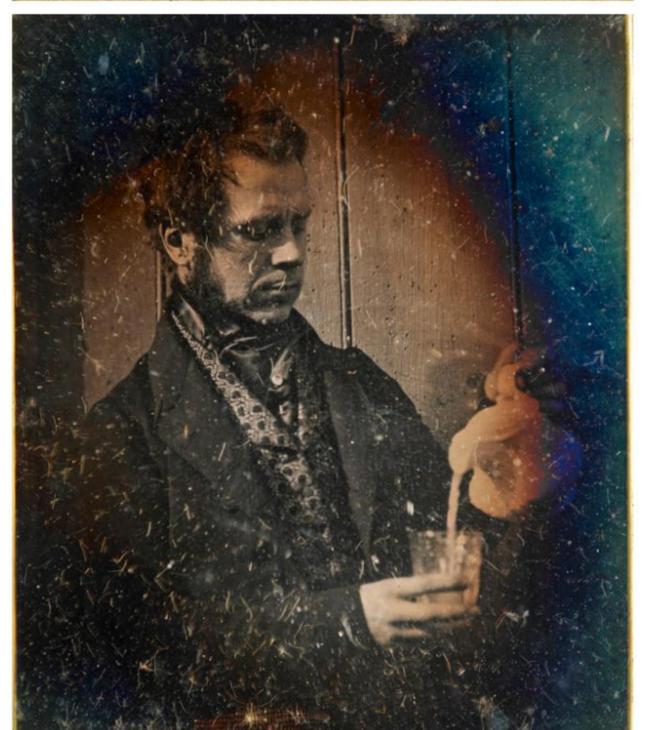
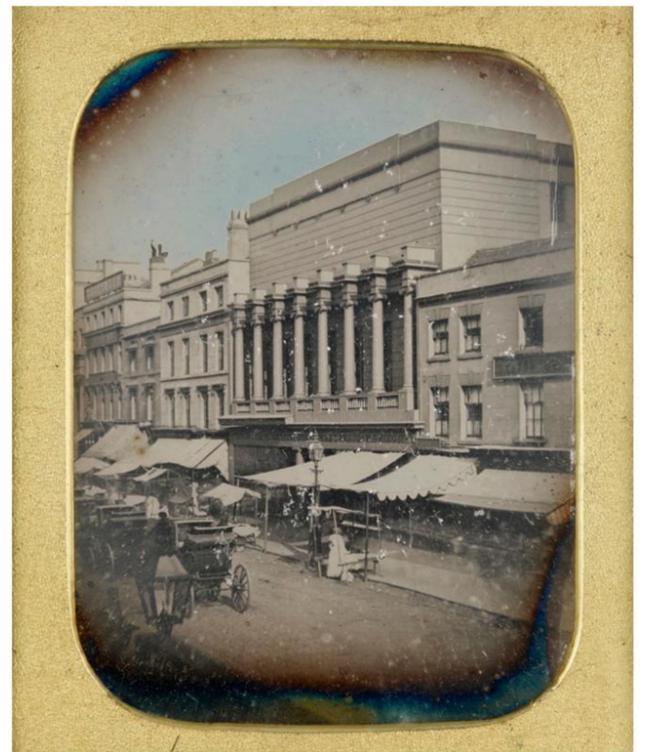
Pictured: Christmas in Cathedral Square, Luminare at Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Sherlock Holmes at Birmingham Rep

History & Heritage



Free outdoor exhibition puts city's photography pioneer in the spotlight

TRAM-STOP TAKEOVER TELLS FASCINATING STORY OF INVENTION AND CREATIVITY IN THE DISTRICT



Birmingham is shining a spotlight on one of its most overlooked innovators with a brand-new exhibition 'Birmingham's Photographic Pioneer' honouring George Shaw (1818-1904), the city's first photographer and true unsung hero of Victorian Birmingham.

Produced by artist Jo Gane and organised and funded by Colmore BID, the free, open to all exhibition will explore Shaw's pioneering contributions to photography, science and civic life, and aims to restore his rightful place among the city's celebrated figures.

While Birmingham proudly commemorates icons like Boulton

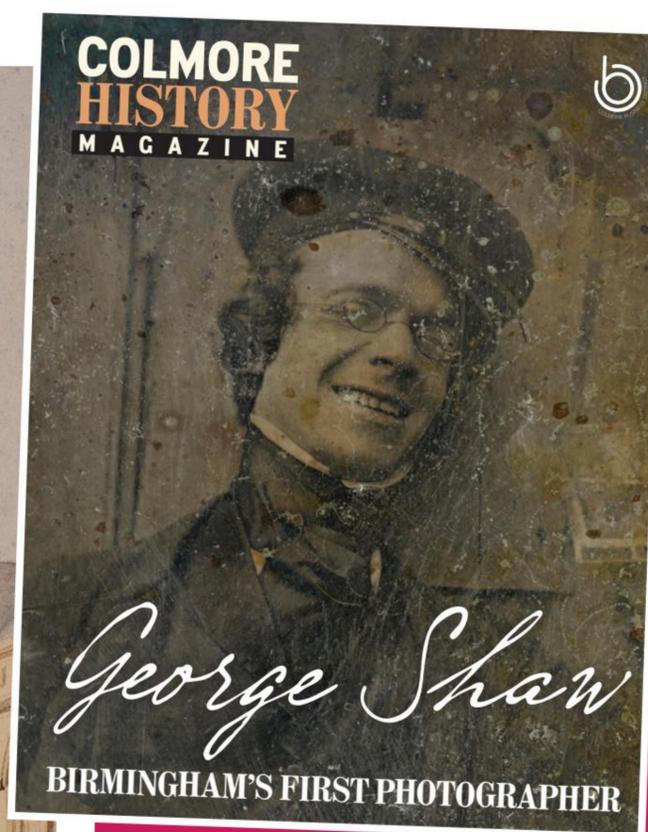
and Watt, Benjamin Zephaniah, Ozzy Osbourne and even the fictional Tommy Shelby, George Shaw's legacy has remained largely unrecognised – until now. Born in Dudley and the son of a glass maker, Shaw was a patent agent, chemist, artist and educator who made Birmingham's first daguerreotype photograph in 1839.

Shaw's influence extended far beyond photography, lecturing widely on chemistry and scientific advancements. He played a key role in the city's educational institutions, helping to establish Birmingham's first free public library. His work caught the attention of scientist Michael

Faraday, where Shaw collaborated with metallurgist John Percy on groundbreaking experiments.

Designed and arranged by Birmingham designer Stacey Barnfield, the exhibition is located at the West Midlands Metro Town Hall stop, outside Queen's College chambers, a key building where Shaw lectured and undertook his practice. It will showcase reproductions of rare daguerreotypes uncovered by the late Pete James, former curator of photographs at Birmingham Central Library.

These images, now the subject of a practice-based PhD study by artist Jo Gane, offer a unique glimpse into



BID produces Special digital history magazine

For history and heritage lovers, Colmore Business District has just the thing. The brand-new Colmore History Magazine, released in time for Birmingham Heritage Week, is a 16-page digital publication deep-diving into the stories, architecture and personalities that have shaped the District.

Inside, readers will find fresh features on Old Square, tracing its evolution from civic gathering space to its modern role in the life of the district; the sweeping architecture of Colmore, from Georgian façades to Victorian commercial might; and a moving profile of George Shaw (1818-1904), Birmingham's early photographic pioneer.

The magazine meets Colmore BID's ambition to connect the present-day buzz of business, bars and culture with the deeper layers of history underneath our feet.

Visit: colmorebusinessdistrict.com/publications/colmore-history-magazine/

'George Shaw's story is a powerful reminder of Birmingham's legacy as a city of innovation and creativity'

Shaw's artistic and scientific legacy. In partnership with Colmore BID, Gane has developed this exhibition to reconnect Birmingham with its innovative industrial and artistic past. She said: "It has been a privilege to research Shaw's photographs and uncover the activities of his network

in Birmingham that tells a fascinating story of art, science and industry. I'm looking forward to sharing this."

Melanie Williams, Colmore BID Board Director and lead of Outstanding Places said: "George Shaw's story is a powerful reminder of Birmingham's legacy as a city of innovation and creativity. We're proud to deliver this exhibition which not only celebrates a largely unrecognised pioneer, but also invites the city to better reflect and respect its rich industrial and artistic heritage."

For more information, visit colmorebusinessdistrict.com/projects/george-shaw

Facing page: George Shaw and his revolutionary photographs

Above: Paradise Street Towards Christ Church, Birmingham, 1840-1845, by Charles Rudd, courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust

Livery Street Subway bursts into colour

ONCE-NEGLECTED UNDERPASS NOW A VIBRANT, WELCOMING PEDESTRIAN ROUTE, FEATURING A STRIKING CERAMIC TILE INSTALLATION BY ARTIST ADAM NATHANIEL FURMAN

A neglected and uninviting pedestrian subway in Birmingham city-centre has been transformed into a vibrant, welcoming thoroughfare, thanks to a £120,000 revitalisation project led by Colmore BID, in partnership with Moda Living, Birmingham City Council and Jewellery Quarter BID.

The project, aimed at improving safety, connectivity and aesthetic appeal, has reimagined the Livery Street subway with a stunning installation of colourful ceramic tiles, designed by Adam Nathaniel Furman.

With a deep understanding of Birmingham's rich history, Furman explored the architectural and cultural history of both the Colmore and Jewellery Quarter BID areas, developing an innovative ceramic tile design that gives the illusion of three-dimensionality, despite being a flat, two-dimensional surface.

The design has transformed the subway's flank walls into a canvas for civic pride, demonstrating Colmore BID's mission in creating more engaging and maintained public

spaces to better connect the city-centre.

"This project is a fantastic example of how art and infrastructure can come together to improve everyday experiences in one of Birmingham's key city-centre pedestrian links," says Nicola Fleet-Milne, Chair of Colmore BID. "Thanks to our investment with our partners, what was once a dark and uninviting underpass is now a bright, creative, and connected corridor that people can enjoy and feel safe using."

Colmore BID spearheaded the initiative through their Outstanding Places Working Group, assembling a project group that includes Birmingham City Council (BCC), the subway's owner, Moda Living and Jewellery Quarter BID.

The project group unveiled the completed subway to the public and is already receiving positive feedback from residents and visitors alike.

Cllr Majid Mahmood, cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "This is a fantastic way



to transform our subways, showing real pride in the city and making the space feel welcoming and vibrant, not simply a place to walk through.

"We want all parts of the city to be connected and easily accessible for pedestrians so well done to Colmore BID and partners for their great work."

Livery Street Subway is located adjacent to Moda, Great Charles



Michele Wilby CEO at Colmore BID, Nicola Fleet-Milne Chair of Colmore BID Board, Luke Crane CEO of The Jewellery Quarter BID, James Blakey Planning and Engagement Director at Moda and Councillor Majid Mahmood

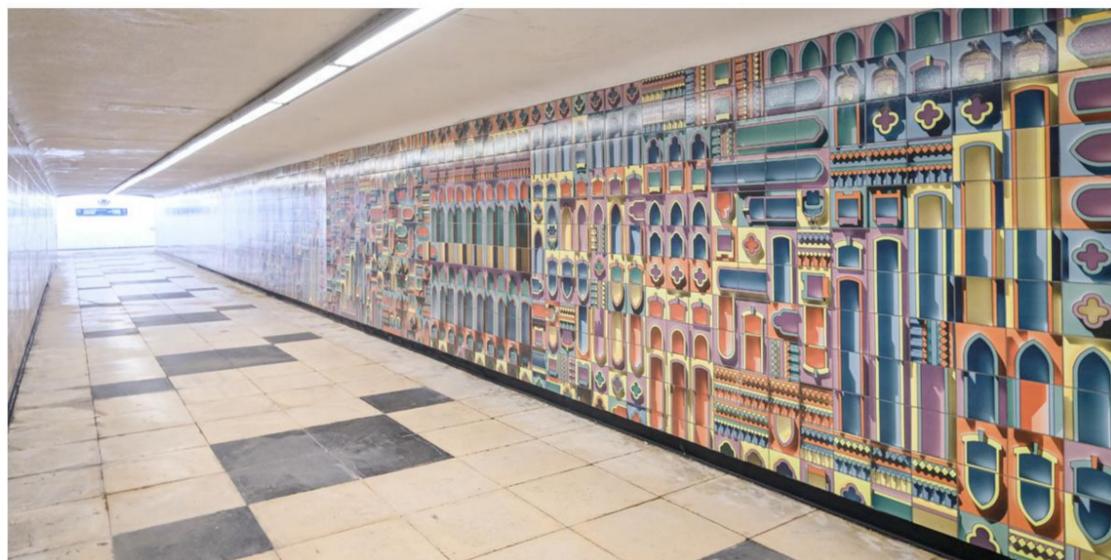
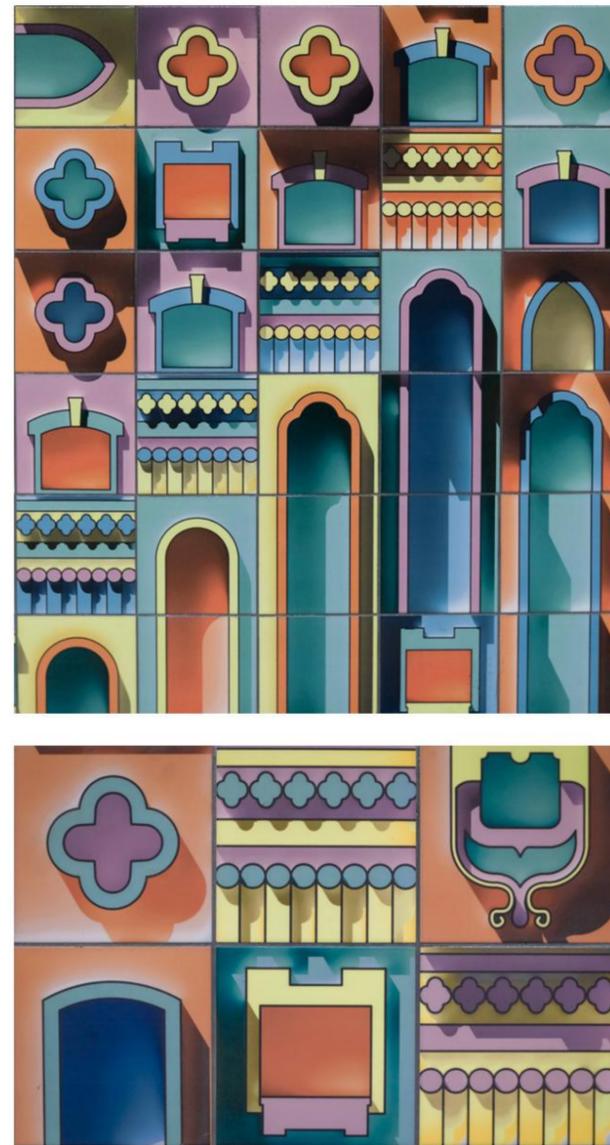


Mark Wood (Digital Ceramic Systems Ltd), Adam Nathaniel Furman (artist), Philip Singleton (project manager, Colmore BID).



**4,500, 20cm
 porcelain tiles**

122ft subway



Street, where Moda is transforming a site left vacant for more than seventy years into more than 700 best-in-class new homes, community spaces and landscaped public realm.

James Blakey, Planning and Engagement Director at Moda Living, said: "The transformed Livery Street Subway is a testament to what can be achieved when the public and private sectors come together with a shared

vision to improve our city. By creating a safer, more welcoming, and visually inspiring space, we've not only enhanced connectivity between two key districts but also delivered lasting social value for the communities who live, work, and visit here.

"We're delighted to have played our part in helping to bring this important gateway to life as we prepare to welcome our first residents to Moda,

Great Charles Street early next year."

Luke Crane, CEO at The Jewellery Quarter BID, said: "Seeing the Livery Street subway burst into colour is a proud moment for everyone involved. By working in partnership with Colmore BID, Moda Living and Birmingham City Council, we've transformed a once-neglected underpass into a safe and vibrant gateway between our districts.

This project celebrates the heritage and creativity of The Jewellery Quarter and enhances connectivity for residents, businesses, and visitors. It's a shining example of what can be achieved when we invest in public spaces together and demonstrates our commitment to fostering growth and civic pride across the city."

This project represents a unique collaboration between Colmore BID, Jewellery Quarter BID, Moda, and Birmingham City Council, all working together to proactively address a long-standing issue into a positive turn for the city.



140 years of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

This year marks the 140th anniversary of the opening of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

Construction of the museum building began in 1881. The inscription stone for the 'Free Public Art Gallery and the Offices of the Corporation Gas Department' in the museum entrance was laid by Richard Chamberlain, Mayor of Birmingham, on 19 June 1881 and bears the motto

'By the gains of industry we promote art'.

The building, consisting of six gallery spaces, was officially opened on Saturday 28 November 1885 by the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII). Over 100 million people have visited since the original opening.

Local benefactors were instrumental in the development of both the museum building and its collections.

John Feeney (1839 to 1905) was a metalworking apprentice before joining the family's newspaper, the Birmingham Daily Post, and later founding the Birmingham Daily Mail.

Feeney was a significant supporter of Birmingham, donating art to the museum since it opened and helping to develop the world-famous Pre-Raphaelite collection. When he died in 1905, Feeney left £50,000



History & Heritage



in his will to build new galleries. The Feeney Galleries (40 in total) were built between Edmund Street and Great Charles Street, connected to the older galleries with a new bridge.

Disaster struck the museum during World War II when, during the night of 22 November 1940, six of the Feeney galleries were destroyed by a bomb and the bridge gallery and the natural history section were also damaged. Fortunately, no staff were hurt and the exhibits had already been removed to places of safety.

After having closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic, a programme of essential maintenance works had to be carried out across the Grade II* listed building. This included electrical work, upgrades to heating, roof repairs and replacing lifts.

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery opened again in October 2024 in the first phase of its reopening, with new displays in the Round Room and Industrial Gallery, as well as two new galleries dedicated to children and families, telling stories about nature in the city.

This was followed by the reopening of its history galleries in May 2025, along with a new display, The Elephant in the Room, which explores how artefacts

from around the world came to be part of Birmingham Museums' collections.

The phased reopening will continue with a new display of works from the city's Pre-Raphaelite collection in October 2025.

To mark the 140th anniversary, a series of special events is planned at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery over the weekend of 28 to 30 November. Birmingham Museums is also launching a major fundraising campaign to raise two million pounds to safeguard the city's cultural heritage.

Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah, co-chief executives of Birmingham Museums Trust, said: "This milestone is a testament to 140 years of creativity and resilience.

"From its foundation in the 19th century to its modern reinvention, the museum has been woven into the fabric of Birmingham life.

"We're proud to celebrate the many stories it holds - and even prouder to help write its next chapter.

"That's why this anniversary isn't just a look back—it's an invitation to imagine what lies ahead and to celebrate a museum that is evolving with its city and reminding us that cultural institutions can be vibrant, inclusive and rooted in local stories."

Above and facing page: The Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery Round Room

Facing page: Damage during WWII and the building as it looks today, fronting Chamberlain Square

Never a dull day!

NEWS FROM THE CITY CURATOR

Right now, I'm deep in planning and fundraising for an exciting range of projects - there's never a dull day!

We're hard at work ensuring Birmingham Light Festival returns for a second year - watch this space for updates soon.

Following Birmingham's achievement of World Craft City Status for Jewellery and the Allied Trades, my work on the UK's Jewellery

Festival, Birmingham Jewellery Biennial has also accelerated. It's been fantastic to connect with partners who share my ambitions for this new hero event.

It's not all festivals though - I'm particularly excited about developing a Food & Drink Tourism Strategy for the city - a missing piece for Birmingham as we look to develop as a food destination. I'm currently bringing together partners and funders to turn this from idea to reality.

I've also been supporting a range of other projects, including the International Day of Birmingham celebrations. With this event and with much of my wider work, my role has been around enabling collaboration and it really is such a joy to see what can be achieved when we work together.

As ever - you can read more on my work on the Colmore BID website.

**ALEX NICHOLSON-EVANS,
CITY CURATOR**



Food & Drink

Raise a glass in the District at Birmingham Cocktail Weekend



You can enjoy discounts and promotions at bars across the Business District between 23-26 October. Here's how:

Colmore BID is proud to sponsor Birmingham Cocktail Weekend (BCW) – Winter Edition. From cosy corners to stylish bars, our District offers the perfect backdrop for a weekend of delicious drinks, immersive experiences, and good times.

GET STARTED AT THE MONKEY SHOULDER HUB

Kick off your BCW adventure at The Monkey Shoulder Hub in The Mailbox. Show your e-ticket, grab your exclusive wristband and guidebook, and enjoy a complimentary dram from Monkey Shoulder before setting off on your cocktail journey.

SIP SIGNATURE COCKTAILS FOR JUST £6

Your wristband unlocks £6 signature cocktails at every participating venue. In the Colmore District, don't miss:

- **Dishoom** – Where classic cocktails meet Bombay-inspired flair.
- **F1 Arcade** – Enjoy a drink in a buzzing arcade atmosphere.
- **Hotel du Vin** – Indulge in elegant cocktails in a chic setting.
- **Regina's** – A cosy spot perfect for intimate sips.
- **Tattu** – Bold and creative cocktails in an immersive space.



Prefer non-alcoholic options? Each venue also offers £5 mocktails so everyone can join the fun.

EXCLUSIVE £9 COCKTAIL & SNACK PAIRINGS

For the Winter Edition, a select few venues are serving up £9 cocktail and snack pairings, perfect for combining a tippie with a tasty bite.

Your wristband also gives you access to some fantastic food offers during the festival, including 20% off all food at F1 Arcade, 35% off food at the Bistro at Hotel du Vin, and a complimentary BCW signature cocktail at Dishoom when ordering any Breakfast Naan.*

*T&C's apply. Visit birminghamcocktailweekend.co.uk/food-offers for details.



VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE

Don't forget to vote for the Best Cocktail of Birmingham Cocktail Weekend. Your vote could help crown a winner whose cocktail might even make it onto the regular menu!

JOIN THE FUN ON INSTAGRAM

Colmore BID is running a special Instagram competition in collaboration with BCW Winter Edition. Follow us @colmorebusinessdistrict for your chance to win an amazing prize from F1 Arcade!

PLAN YOUR WEEKEND

Explore Colmore at your own pace, discover hidden gems, and make the most of exclusive events available only to wristband holders. Be sure to book lunch or dinner in advance, and keep an eye on our social media for clues about signature drinks.

This Winter Edition of BCW is the perfect reason to immerse yourself in Birmingham's vibrant city centre. Don't miss out!

Live jazz and more at The Grand

Inspired by the legendary Ronnie Scott's and the vibrant Soho jazz scene, Downstairs at The Grand is bringing live blues, jazz, cabaret and more right back to the heart of Birmingham.

This intimate speakeasy-style venue sets the stage for weekly residencies from top-tier musicians, alongside a diverse programme featuring boogie-woogie, cabaret in the style

of London's Crazy Coqs, and even West End stars performing musical theatre favourites.

Open every Thursday to Saturday from 10pm until 2am, Downstairs at The Grand promises an unforgettable late-night experience. Guests can settle in with expertly mixed cocktails in one of the city's most atmospheric live venues.

Visit thegrandhotelbirmingham.co.uk/whats-on





Hi, Society!

Society Brum is now officially open at One Colmore Square! Serving up world class street food and a wide range of pints and cocktails, expect unbeatable vibes from day to

night, every day of the week. The team are thrilled to have landed in Birmingham.

Groups of 8+ can book via societybirmingham.com. Join the buzz!



Food & Drink

‘Hospitality is in my blood, it is part of being Italian. We love food, we love people, and we love bringing them together’

A bright new arrival has joined Newhall Street. Regina’s, the latest addition to the Business District dining scene, is led by experienced hospitality professional **GREGORIO CUNSOLO**. Here, he shares his thoughts on Regina’s, the city’s vibrant leisure and hospitality scene, and what the future might hold for the industry.

Regina’s has recently opened its doors on Newhall Street. What do you want people to know about the restaurant, and what makes it distinctive in Birmingham’s dining scene?

Regina’s brings Mediterranean flavours, warmth and energy to Birmingham city centre. Guests are welcomed into a stylish yet relaxed space, perfect for a business lunch, cocktails after work, a night of live music or a Sunday roast with family and friends.

There is something to enjoy every day of the week. From Monday to Friday, our set lunch menu offers a

quick, great-value break without compromising on flavour. On Thursdays, we celebrate the Italian tradition of Aperitivo from 5pm to 8pm, with complimentary bites served alongside drinks. Every Friday and Saturday, live music runs from 7pm to 10pm followed by a DJ into the night. On Sundays, we put a Mediterranean twist on the classic Sunday roast.

Regina’s isn’t just a restaurant, it is a place to connect, celebrate and create memories.

You’ve managed and led restaurants for many years. How has that experience shaped the way you’re approaching Regina’s, both for your team and for your guests?

I grew up in Soverato, a beautiful city in Calabria, before moving to Milan to study accounting. Even while learning finance and spreadsheets, I spent summers working in restaurants and realised hospitality suited me perfectly. It is dynamic, full of energy, and about connecting with people every day. Spreadsheets are still part of my work, but hospitality allows me to combine structure with creativity and passion.

Hospitality is in my blood, it is part of being Italian. We love food, we love people, and we love bringing them together.

Over the past 12 years in the UK, I have helped open and manage four restaurants and consulted on three more. Each experience taught me the value of strong teams, creating a welcoming atmosphere, and striving for consistency.

My goal is for the team to feel empowered and proud, and for every guest to experience the same warmth and attention to detail, whatever the occasion.



Leisure and hospitality in Birmingham have faced challenges in recent years, from changing work patterns to rising costs. How do you see the sector evolving right now, and what do you think operators need to focus on most?

The past few years have been challenging for our industry. Rising costs, staffing shortages, and changing work patterns have all had an impact. Birmingham is a dynamic and growing city with an increasingly vibrant dining scene. People may be more selective about when and where they go out, but that makes quality and experience more important than ever.

For operators, the focus needs to be on value, not just in terms of price, but in creating experiences that feel worth people’s time and money. That means genuine hospitality, menus that feel distinctive, and environments where people want to return.

Looking ahead, what are your hopes for Regina’s over the next year or two, and what would success look like to you in this new chapter?

For me, success is about building something lasting and meaningful. In the short term, I want Regina’s to





establish itself as one of the must-visit restaurants in Birmingham, not just for the food but for the overall experience.

I want us to become part of the community on Newhall Street and in Colmore Business District, a place people recommend to friends and colleagues with pride.

In the longer term, I hope Regina's becomes a name people associate with quality, warmth, and Mediterranean soul.

And finally, on a personal note, what excites you most about working in Birmingham's hospitality scene at this moment in time?

What excites me most is the energy of the city. Birmingham is diverse, ambitious, and constantly evolving. The hospitality scene reflects that, full of creativity and passion, with chefs, restaurateurs, and operators all bringing something different.

For me, it is also personal. I come from Calabria, where hospitality is part of who we are. Italians are people-people, we live for good food, good company, and good conversation. Being able to bring that spirit to Birmingham and share it with such a vibrant community is a privilege.



24 Stories (formerly Orelle) named best in Birmingham

For the second year running, 24 Stories (formerly Orelle) has been named 'Best Restaurant in Birmingham' at the British Restaurant Awards.

Celebrating the best restaurants, chefs and bars across the country, the British Restaurant Awards 2025 recognised hospitality professionals across 30 categories during a glittering ceremony at The Crown London in August.

The restaurant was shortlisted alongside eight other venues in the city and crowned Best Restaurant in Birmingham following a public vote.

Part of The Evolv Collection, 24 Stories is located on the 24th floor of 103 Colmore



Row, boasting unrivalled, panoramic views of the city and beyond, serving seasonal classics and modern French dishes, as well as classic and innovative cocktails, expertly crafted by some of Birmingham's best mixologists.

Executive Chef, Kiran Suvarna, (pictured) said: "We are honoured to be awarded 'Best Restaurant in Birmingham' for the second year running. As a team we pride ourselves

on our seasonal changing menus and hospitality, so to be recognised within a city of great talent is an honour. We'd like to say a huge thank you to the British Restaurant Awards and for everyone that voted for us."

Pictures: Stacey Barnfield for Colmore BID

Movers & Shakers

A round-up of the latest Business District launches, relocations, appointments and promotions



HARPER JAMES

Aston University's digital transformation experts are partnering with Business District-based law firm Harper James to develop an intelligent legal services platform, powered by Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), that will reshape how lawyers deliver services.

Through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), the three-year project will involve specialist expertise in data science and AI to create new technologies for Waterloo-based Harper James.

The law firm, which specialises in supporting SMEs, will use the system to enable its commercial lawyers to speed up work by automating processes like project scoping, proposals contracting and client onboarding.

Harper James aims to differentiate itself in the UK legal sector through the way it delivers legal services and its subscription model.



Pictured: The M3 team in Chamberlain Square

M3.AGENCY

Founded in the Midlands and shaped by Birmingham's creative energy, M3.agency is making bold moves across the UK – and beyond. With new offices launched in Manchester, Bristol, and Cardiff, and an international base opening in Dubai, the full-service marketing agency is building on its regional success to establish itself as a major player on the national and global stage.

Born in Shropshire and rooted in Birmingham's city centre, M3 has grown into one of the region's most respected independent agencies. Over the past six

years, the Birmingham office, now based at Cubo in Chamberlain Square, has become the cultural and creative heart of the business. It houses digital marketing, client services, and creative teams working side-by-side, delivering high-impact campaigns for clients including MG Motor UK, Visit Jersey, and University of Birmingham Sport & Fitness.

"Birmingham is where our pace, ambition and creativity come together," explains CEO Nick Lovett. "But it's also the launchpad for our growth. What we've built here – collaborative teams, integrated thinking, and a deep understanding of regional markets – is what we're now taking into new locations."

Movers & Shakers



FBC MANBY

Leading law firm FBC Manby Bowdler has bolstered its Birmingham city centre Family team with three new appointments. The recruitment drive is part of a wider strategy for new job creation as the firm continues to expand its presence across the West Midlands.

Shelley De'Worringham joins the firm as partner and office lead, alongside Hannah Stubbs as a senior associate and Holly Goldingay as paralegal.

With a wealth of experience across all aspects of family law, De'Worringham brings

to the Family Law, Divorce & Children team a hands-on approach to ensure clients receive clear, strategic and empathetic advice.

Hannah Stubbs is an expert in financial disputes and complex Children Act matters. She regularly deals with high net worth cases including cohabitee disputes, trusts and complicated property ownership, pre-nuptial and post-nuptial arrangements.

She has been recognised as a key lawyer in the Legal 500 for 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Holly Goldingay has joined the firm as a paralegal where she helps with all aspects of family law.

While working full time,

Goldingay is studying towards the LLM Legal Practice Course (LPC) at Nottingham Trent University.

The new Bennetts Hill office, on the corner of Colmore Row, offers legal advice to businesses and individuals. Its opening marks a significant period of growth for the firm. In the last year, FBC Manby Bowdler turnover topped £17 million and the firm has plans for further growth in the next 24 months.

It is the founding firm of the new Adeptio Law Group established to create a national legal services platform through the strategic acquisition of high-quality regional law firms.



BRUNTWOOD

Tommy Bailey, former Senior General Manager at Gusto on Colmore Row, has joined Bruntwood as Area Operations Manager.

In his new role, Bailey will be overseeing operations across Bruntwood's portfolio of properties including Cornwall Buildings on Newhall Street, Cornerblock on Cornwall Street and Centre City on Hill Street.

From exclusive events and networking opportunities to state-of-the-art facilities designed to put employee wellbeing first, Bruntwood help businesses to thrive.

HCR LAW

HCR Law has strengthened its Birmingham Real Estate team with the appointment of David Perry as partner.

Perry joins from a London-headquartered firm, where he was national head of affordable housing. A recognised leader in his field, he is ranked in Chambers and Partners and listed by Legal 500 as a Leading Partner in social housing.

Specialising in residential development, housing and regeneration schemes, Perry has advised on major buy- and sell-side transactions across the affordable housing and build-to-rent markets.

His arrival follows the Birmingham office's recent growth, including the appointments of social housing expert Louise Drew, commercial property specialist Lauren Perdakis, and dispute resolution partner Peter Brewer.

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL ST PHILIP'S

St Philip's Cathedral has welcomed a very important new recruit. Michael Ball has joined the cathedral as their new Chief Operating Officer.

He said: "I am honoured to be appointed to this exciting new role. I hope to bring the skills I've developed through years of collaborative working in the cooperative sector to useful effect in this role."

The Very Reverend Matt Thompson, Dean of Birmingham said: "I am delighted that Michael has been appointed as COO. Our cathedral community, volunteers and the staff team are looking forward very much to welcoming him and working with him."



Movers & Shakers

CROWE

Professional services company, Crowe, has opened a new office in Birmingham, marking a significant step in its continued growth strategy.

The firm now occupies the entire eighth floor of One Colmore Row. With 4,169 sq ft of new office space.

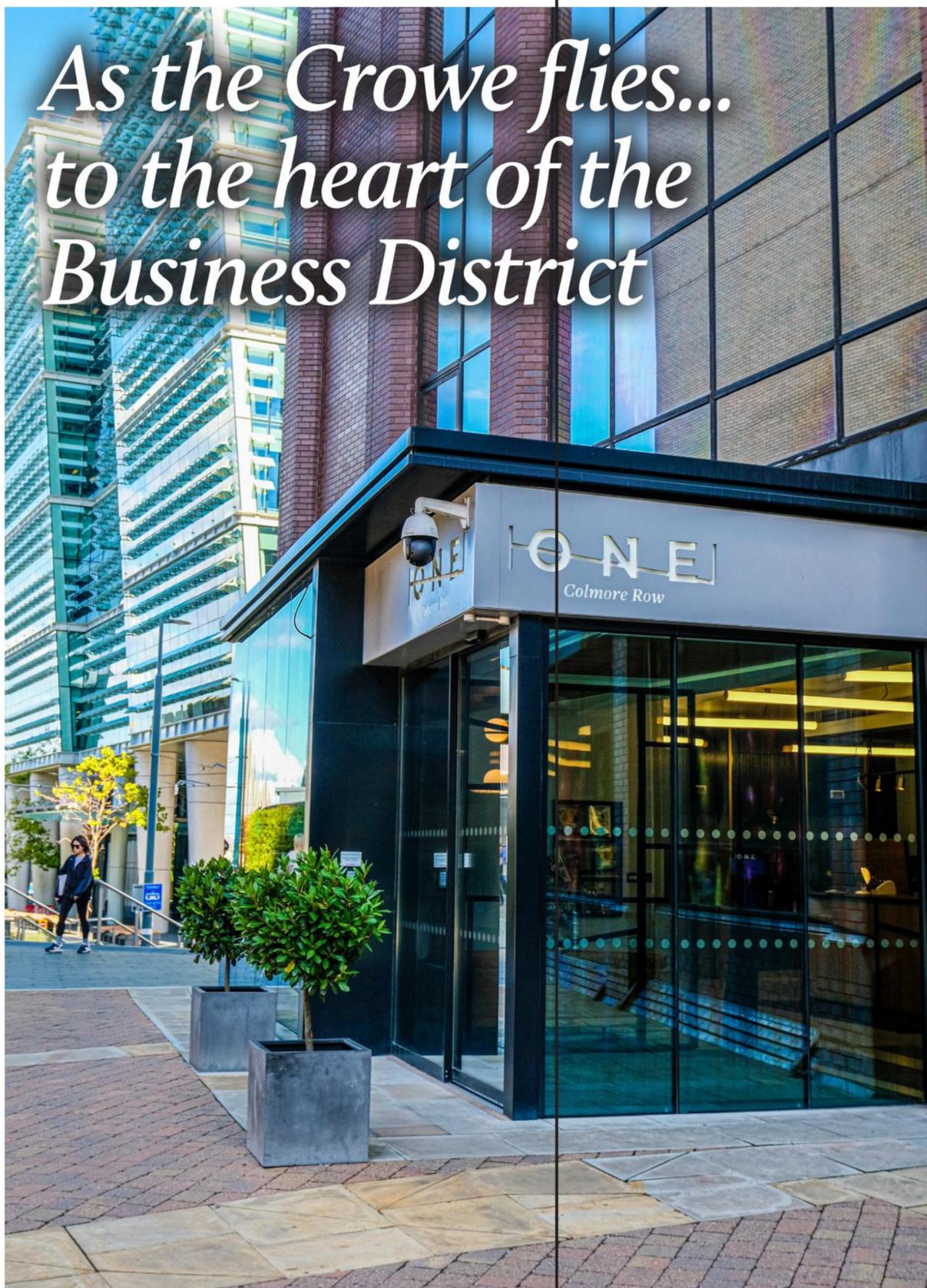
The new office boasts extensively refurbished Grade A spaces and sustainability credentials, including a zero waste to landfill policy and 100% green energy usage, aligning to Crowe's wider sustainability strategy.

Ross Prince, Managing Partner of Crowe in the Midlands and Southwest, said: "Colmore Row is traditionally Birmingham's most prestigious address, and the Colmore Business District is filled with well-respected businesses. The office's prime location positions us in the heart of the city's dynamic business community and enables us to be even more connected to our clients and wider business network."

Crowe's new office will initially serve as a base for its local advisory and consulting teams to support the expansion of their capabilities.

Prince added: "To begin this exciting chapter, we have initially relocated some of our local advisory and consulting teams based in our nearby Oldbury office. At the same time, we remain committed to investing in our existing offices in the Midlands Southwest to continue to deliver the quality of service our clients expect.

"It's evident to me that our culture and values at Crowe are what sets us apart. Our focus remains on attracting and retaining the very best talent and we're excited to unlock the next phase of our growth."



New workspace at Five St Philips

Gilbanks has opened at Five St Philips, joining Colmore BID's professional community. The new space includes serviced offices, meeting rooms and a top-floor event space opening onto a roof terrace with city views. The addition reflects the area's continued growth as a hub for business and collaboration in Birmingham.

Visit gilbanks.com/locations/birmingham-five-st-philips

Mills & Reeve marks record growth and city milestone

MILLS & REEVE

Law firm Mills & Reeve has reported record revenues of £181 million for its 2024/25 financial year – an increase of £13 million nationally and 12% growth in the Midlands. The results coincide with the first anniversary of the firm's Birmingham team moving into One Centenary Way, Paradise.

As in previous years, staff have shared in the success through the firm's all-staff bonus. This year's national bonus pool was £1.4 million, with most employees receiving at least £1,000.

The strong performance reflects an ambitious strategy focused on people, clients and technology. Recent highlights include the arrival of partners Rob Biddlecombe (environmental law) and Catherine Savage (regulatory and disputes), alongside five regional promotions – including Sian Jackson to partner in employment – and four newly

qualified lawyers joining the Birmingham office.

The firm has also expanded its international reach with the launch of M&R Global, rolled out AI tools such as CoPilot and Kira, and strengthened its commitment to sustainability through investment in the Small Woods Association and official validation of its net zero targets by the SBTi.

Community impact remains central, with partnerships across Birmingham including George Dixon Academy, Envision, SIFA Fireside and Birmingham Central Food Bank.

Jayne Hussey, partner and head of the Birmingham office, said: "This is a strong performance for our team in a challenging market. We've continued to invest in our people, technology and offices to push forward with our ambitious 2030 strategy. The Midlands has huge potential, and we're well positioned for continued expansion."

BNP PARIBAS REAL ESTATE

BNP Paribas Real Estate has strengthened its Midlands operation with the appointment of Martin Cook as Senior Director, Lease Advisory.

The move underlines the firm's commitment to boosting regional expertise and delivering strategic advice for both landlords and occupiers.

With nearly 35 years' experience in commercial property, Cook joins from KWB Commercial Property Specialists, where he developed a strong track record in rent reviews, lease renewals, lease breaks and re-gearing.

His ability to enhance investment performance for landlords – while securing value for tenants – makes him a valuable asset for BNP Paribas.

Working from the firm's Birmingham office, Martin will draw on BNP Paribas Real Estate's extensive data and market insight to deliver proactive lease



management and strategic advisory across the Midlands, while collaborating with teams throughout the UK network.

Leighton Thomas, Head of Lease Advisory, praised Cook's "experience and track record in the Midlands market" and noted that the appointment underscores the company's drive to deepen regional capability.

BISHOP FLEMING

Bishop Fleming, one of the UK's leading accountancy, audit, tax, and advisory firms, is marking a double achievement in 2025 – welcoming its largest ever intake of apprentices and gaining national recognition as a top employer.

In September, 73 new apprentices – a mix of school leavers, graduates, and placement students – joined the firm across its nine offices in the West Midlands and South West, including their Business District office on Colmore Row.

Their arrival reflects Bishop Fleming's continued investment in developing the next generation of professionals, six years into the sustained growth of its apprenticeship programme.

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY COMMISSION

The Mayor of the West Midlands, Richard Parker, has launched a recruitment drive for a Night-Time Economy Commission, aiming to safeguard and revive the region's after-dark sectors. The commission, managed by the WMCA over six months, invited up to eight private-sector representatives from across pubs, live music venues, cinemas, fitness, food service and more.

It will assess the challenges these industries face – such as safety, operations and employment – and deliver recommendations on what support they need.

Mayor Parker said: "Our night-time economy is a crucial part of what makes the West Midlands a vibrant place to live, work and visit. That's why I'm going to be working side by side with industry leaders and businesses to help this sector not just survive but thrive."

‘I’m passionate about Birmingham, not just for its heritage, but for the diversity of opportunity it offers’

EY’S NEW MIDLANDS MANAGING PARTNER TALKS OF PRIDE AND PASSION FOR THE REGION

EY has announced the appointment of Adrian Roberts as its new Midlands Managing Partner and Markets Leader, succeeding Simon O’Neill, who has led the region since 2017 and now serves as EY Deputy Assurance Service Line Leader.

Roberts’ appointment marks a pivotal moment for EY in the Midlands, as the firm continues to invest in talent and infrastructure to support its growth ambitions.

‘With over 1,200 colleagues and 55 partners based in our Birmingham office, we have an exceptional team driving growth, delivering outstanding client service, and creating fulfilling careers’

Adrian’s career with EY began in 1997 when he joined as a graduate from Birmingham University. He became a Partner in 2009 and has since held several key leadership roles, including Head of Audit Quality for the UK & Ireland and Partner Sponsor of EY’s Entrepreneur Of The Year programme in the Midlands. His

career has been shaped by broad international experience, including a secondment in Seattle and global audit engagements, alongside deep expertise in supporting private and mid-market companies across diverse industries.

Reflecting on his new role, Roberts



said: “Having lived and worked in the Midlands for over 30 years, I consider myself something of an adopted local.

“I’m deeply passionate about Birmingham and the wider region, not just for its rich industrial heritage, but for the incredible diversity of

opportunity it offers today. From leading-edge advancements in manufacturing and technology to world-class research in life sciences and a thriving professional services sector, the Midlands is a powerhouse of innovation and growth.

“I’m incredibly proud to lead EY’s business in the Midlands. With over 1,200 colleagues and 55 partners based in our Birmingham office, we have an exceptional team driving growth, delivering outstanding client service, and creating fulfilling careers.

“I’m particularly excited about our upcoming move to Three Chamberlain Square in 2026. This investment places EY at the heart of the region’s business community and underscores our long-term commitment to the Midlands.

“I’d also like to take this opportunity to thank Simon for his leadership over the past eight years, during which EY has achieved remarkable growth and made a lasting impact across the region”

Earlier this year, EY confirmed plans to relocate from One Colmore Square, its home for the past two decades, to Three Chamberlain Square, which is part of the Paradise Birmingham development. The new office will span the top three floors, covering 70,000 sq ft, with scope for future expansion to support EY’s continued growth.

FOUR NEW PARTNERS ANNOUNCED

In addition to Adrian Roberts’ appointment, EY has also recently announced the promotion of four new Partners in its Birmingham office, strengthening its capabilities in tax, audit, financial services, and consulting, and its commitment to supporting clients in a dynamic and evolving business landscape.

■ Ali Fitt has been promoted to Partner in the indirect tax team, and specialises in working with companies in the industrials and energy sectors.

■ Callum Griffiths, an international tax Partner with over 13 years of experience, advises listed companies on global tax reform and geopolitical developments.

■ John Saxton has over two decades of industry experience and provides consulting services focused on conduct and regulatory matters in financial services.

■ Matt Wilcox, who joined EY as a graduate in 2012, brings extensive audit experience across consumer products, manufacturing, and technology sectors.

You've got the power!

LATEST UPDATES FROM THE BIRMINGHAM ENERGY COMMUNITY

Here is the latest update on The Birmingham Energy Community. This initiative enables businesses to buy low-cost, locally produced clean power, utilising the new Energy Trading System.

If you're a tenant, please read on:

WHAT IS THE BIRMINGHAM ENERGY COMMUNITY, AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

ConsensusPower provides fully funded rooftop solar for commercial buildings.

Building occupants like you get low-cost, clean power, direct from your rooftop and additional power is provided by out-of-town generators, mostly based in the West Midlands.

The Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Energy Platform means overspill power can be shared within the business community. This minimises your energy costs.

Furthermore, ConsensusPower donates at least 0.2p per kWh traded to local non-profit organisations.

AS A TENANT, HOW DOES THIS WORK FOR ME?

You don't need your landlord to have rooftop solar for this to work for you!

You simply need to visit colmorebusinessdistrict.com/projects/local-energy-community-birmingham or the website of our delivery partner, ConsensusPower.

We need to know when your current electricity contract is due for renewal – plus a few more details. Then it's over to ConsensusPower to provide you with an offer, which you can consider at renewal time.

DO I NEED ANY NEW WIRES OR EQUIPMENT?

No! We use all the same grid network – no change there. We may install an upgraded meter, if yours is too old.

WHAT IF I CURRENTLY BUY MY POWER FROM MY LANDLORD?

We can accommodate all types of supply arrangements within commercial buildings, including multi-tenanted properties. You'll need to put us in touch with your landlord if you are happy to. We can supply them with low-cost, locally produced clean power – they would normally share some of the savings with you, as their tenant.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO:

Tenants or building occupiers?

Low-cost, stable-priced, green power from your rooftop.

Alongside this, building occupiers can buy the balance of their power required through the Local Energy Community, simply by switching supplier to ConsensusPower.

The local community?

A donation to local charities of at least £2 per MWh traded within the Local Energy Community.

Local people own a stake in the assets, meaning a proportion of the financial surpluses are retained within the community.

More energy-related economic activity remains within the local business community, rather than going to institutional shareholders.

Birmingham's businesses are powered by locally-produced, clean energy.



By Philip Sutton, retired partner at Squire Patton Boggs and trustee of RoadPeace, the national charity for road crash victims

Five people die on the UK's roads every day. A further 80+ suffer serious, often life-changing, injuries. Families and communities are torn apart. If this level of harm was happening in any other realm of life, it would be declared a public health emergency. The annual cost to the UK economy of road traffic collisions is £42 billion (2022 figure). All this trauma, harm and cost unnecessary, all avoidable.

Businesses can play a key role in transforming this narrative. Many businesses employ drivers or expect staff to move between sites or visit clients using the road network. Every journey is a not only a health and safety matter, it's a corporate engagement with the communities through which it passes.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

- Review or (if necessary) adopt a Driving for Work policy using the Driving for Better Business resources;
- Relaunch that policy internally – highlight how it protects staff and give it the CSR spin;
- Choose safer vehicles;
- Provide driver training;
- Use opportunities to refresh the road safety CSR message – examples include the August National Road Victims Month or the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (3rd Sunday in November);
- Support evidence-based road safety measures in your area;
- Provide corporate support to organisations like RoadPeace.

In the West Midlands, RoadPeace works closely with Transport for West Midlands, offering insights from victims' experiences. The collaboration ensures road safety measures are practical, people-focused, and effective in reducing harm.

Whilst there are some outstanding examples of corporate leadership on road safety matters, there are also many where a fresh approach could help transform the narrative and reduce the times families get the dreaded call or knock on the door from the police.



Colmore BID News

HELP US TO SHAPE THE CITY CENTRE!



Do you want to make a difference to Colmore Business District and the wider city centre? We are always keen to talk to people who want to get involved in delivering the goals set out in our BID4 Business Plan.

We currently have a number of vacancies across our Working Groups – Community Building, Leisure and Hospitality, New Professionals and Safe and

Sound. If you work for a business in Colmore BID, you can join us!

You'll have a direct say on the

projects we deliver, and the opportunity to give back to the District by shaping initiatives that bring people together and contribute to the city's future.

Not only this, Working Groups are a great way to build your own professional network by meeting other members who also work in the area.

Interested in joining us? Email Pippa.Caulkin@colmorebid.co.uk to let us know!



Meet The Team **ZACK PALMER**

Senior Community Support Officer

'Each day brings new challenges, and I take pride in finding solutions that help people who pass through the District'



TELL US WHAT A DAY IN THE LIFE AT COLMORE BID LOOKS LIKE FOR YOU

A typical day for me starts at 7am, I begin by walking around the district to check on anyone who may be rough sleeping. I carry out welfare checks to ensure they're okay, giving them 10–15 minutes to wake up before returning to offer support and signposting to relevant services.

Once the streets have been checked, I engage with local businesses to see how things are going and whether they need any assistance. As I walk around the district, I'm often approached by people asking for directions or help finding businesses, which I'm always happy to provide. I also attend city-wide meetings with partners to ensure our responses remain collaborative and effective.

Throughout the day, I keep an eye out for any anti-social behaviour or breaches of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). If I can resolve

the issue myself, I will. If not, I escalate it to the Council's ASB team or the police camera operators to ensure it's dealt with appropriately.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR ROLE?

That no two days are the same. Each day brings new challenges, and I take pride in finding solutions that help people who pass through the District. It's a dynamic role that keeps me engaged and motivated.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2026?

In the work setting, I'm looking forward to developing my leadership skills further and continuing to play a key role in keeping the district a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

On a personal note, I'm incredibly excited to become a dad for the first time!



Birmingham is set for a show-stopping 2026, with a packed calendar of world-class events, cultural celebrations, and community favourites returning to the city centre. From the roar of athletics fans to the rhythm of live jazz, there's something for everyone to enjoy – and plenty of reasons to mark your diary.

One of the biggest highlights will be the **European Athletics Championships**, taking place in August at the Alexander Stadium. Following the city's success in hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022, Birmingham once again takes the international stage, welcoming elite athletes and visitors from across the continent. Expect a summer of sporting excellence, record-breaking performances, and an electric atmosphere as the world watches Birmingham shine.

Before the athletics fever takes over, the city will burst into colour with **Birmingham Pride** across the late May Bank Holiday weekend. The event, now one of the UK's largest LGBTQ+ festivals, will once again celebrate diversity, equality and love with its famous parade,

live performances, and a party that transforms the city centre into a sea of rainbow flags and smiling faces.

July will bring not one but two major events to the heart of the city. First up is the **Colmore Food Festival**, returning to Victoria Square on Friday 3 and Saturday 4 July 2026. This much-loved event, organised by Colmore BID, attracts tens of thousands of visitors every year with its incredible line-up of restaurants, bars and cafés serving bite-sized tasters at capped prices. Alongside the food and drink, there's live music and entertainment throughout the weekend, making it a true celebration of Birmingham's culinary and cultural talent.

Later in the month, the sounds of saxophones, guitars and soulful vocals will drift through the streets as the **Birmingham Jazz & Blues Festival** returns for its 42nd edition. With dozens of performances, many of them free, the festival will transform bars, squares, and public spaces into vibrant stages. It's one of the city's longest-running cultural events and a firm favourite with music lovers.

But that's not all. Expect a rich

programme of exhibitions, theatre, family activities, and seasonal events across the city throughout the year. With new openings, cultural festivals, and community celebrations, 2026 is shaping up to be one of Birmingham's most exciting years yet.

Alex Tross, Deputy Chair of Colmore BID, said: "2026 is going to be a phenomenal year for Birmingham. From the return of Colmore Food Festival in July to international events like the European Athletics Championships, the city will be buzzing with energy and opportunity. These events bring people together, showcase the very best of Birmingham, and highlight the culture and creativity that make our District such a special place. We're proud to be part of it and can't wait to welcome everyone to join in the celebrations."

Whether you're a foodie, sports fan, music lover or simply looking for great days out, Birmingham has a jam-packed 2026 in store. So get your calendars ready – there really is lots to look forward to.

'We're proud to be part of it and can't wait to welcome everyone to join in the celebrations'

Pictured: Birmingham's Alexander Stadium

Black History Month

‘As a Black woman in finance, standing firm means owning my voice, showing up with confidence, and continuing to challenge the status quo’

Colmore Life speaks with **REBEKAH TAITT**, Executive Support to the CEO of Business & Commercial Banking at Lloyds Banking Group. Her story highlights resilience, leadership, and the importance of creating lasting change in the corporate world.



This Black History month (October 2025), we’re proud to spotlight voices that inspire change, challenge norms, and pave the way for greater inclusion in the business world. This year, we’re honoured to speak with Rebekah Taitt, Executive Support to the CEO of Business & Commercial Banking at Lloyds Banking Group.

With the opening of Lloyds’ flagship office at 125 Colmore Row in September, Rebekah reflects on her journey, the evolving landscape of diversity in finance, and what it means to be a Black woman in the corporate world of today. Her insights offer a powerful lens into leadership, representation and resilience.

Can you tell us a bit about your career journey and what led you to your current role at Lloyds Banking Group

My career has always been rooted in connecting with people and purpose. I started on a degree programme, which gave me a strong foundation and a real understanding of the frontline in banking. Much of my journey has been shaped by relationship roles, where supporting and serving customers was at the heart of everything. Working closely with SME businesses in particular gave me a deep appreciation for the impact financial services can have on communities, and that sense of purpose has stayed with me.

I’m currently working in the Business & Commercial Banking CEO Office. This is giving me deeper insight in how we support businesses across all aspects of the products and services that we provide, as well as strategic experience in corporate governance.

Most recently, I’ve taken on the role of Midlands Community Leader, which has been an incredible opportunity to connect colleagues, celebrate inclusion, and spotlight the impact we can have locally. It’s a great platform for bringing people together and creating space for meaningful conversations.

Right now, we’re preparing to move back into the Colmore Row building after 18 months away, 3,250 colleagues returning to a newly refurbished, sustainable space. It’s a moment of reconnection and renewal, and I’m genuinely excited about what lies ahead.

Were there any pivotal moments or mentors who helped you navigate challenge or inspire growth?

Absolutely. I’ve been fortunate to work with leaders who saw potential in me before I fully saw it in myself. A pivotal moment was moving across to Lloyds Banking Group, a new organisation, a new culture, and

a new opportunity to grow. Matt Hammond, a key figure in the city, played a significant role in helping me navigate the external community and build my network. His guidance helped me reflect on how I wanted to show up as a leader, which was incredibly grounding. I’m genuinely grateful for the time and support he offered and continues to, during that transition, it made a lasting impact.

It hasn’t just been mentors who’ve shaped my journey. Coaches have been equally important. They’ve helped me build confidence, challenge my thinking, and stay intentional about my development. That combination of support has made all the difference.

What does representation in the corporate environment mean to you?

Representation is visibility with purpose. It’s not just about being in the room, it’s about being heard, respected, and empowered to shape outcomes. As a Black woman in corporate finance, I know that my presence challenges norms and opens doors for others. It’s a responsibility I carry with pride.

What does Black History Month mean to you personally?

It’s a moment to pause, reflect, and honour the legacy of those who paved the way. But it’s also a call to action, to keep pushing for equity, inclusion, and justice. For me, it’s about storytelling, truth-telling, and celebrating resilience.

This year’s theme ‘Standing Firm in Power and Pride’, feels especially meaningful. It’s a reminder that our identity, our history, and our presence in any space are sources of strength. As a Black woman in finance, standing firm means owning my voice, showing

up with confidence, and continuing to challenge the status quo. Black History Month isn't just about looking back, it's about standing tall in the present and shaping what comes next.

Are there any stories or figures from Black history that particularly resonate with you?

Michelle Obama's journey and voice have always resonated deeply with me. Her grace, strength, and unwavering commitment to purpose are incredibly powerful. The quote, "When they go low, we go high," has stayed with me not just as a mantra, but as a mindset. It speaks to dignity, resilience, and the power of choosing integrity in the face of adversity.

As a Black woman working in finance, that message carries even more weight. Navigating corporate spaces where you may be one of few, or the only, requires a level of self-awareness, courage, and composure that Michelle embodies so well. Her story reminds me that leadership isn't just about titles, it's about how you show up, how you lift others, and how you stay true to your values, even when the environment challenges them.

Have you seen progress in how the financial services sector approaches diversity and inclusion? What still needs to change?

There's progress, yes. We're seeing more conversations, more commitments, and more visibility. But we need to move from performative gestures to structural change. That means diversifying leadership, embedding inclusion into strategy, and holding ourselves accountable year round.

How do you think organisations can better support Black



Pictured: Rebekah Taitt, Executive Support to the CEO of Business & Commercial Banking at Lloyds Banking Group, at the company's stunning new Business District offices, facing page

professionals – not just during Black History Month, but year-round?

By listening, investing, and acting. Support means mentorship, sponsorship, and creating spaces where Black professionals can thrive, not just survive. It means challenging bias, celebrating excellence, and ensuring that inclusion is a lived experience, not a seasonal campaign.

What are your hopes for the future of Lloyds Banking Group in terms of inclusion and community engagement?

I hope that one day, we won't need dedicated inclusion forums because inclusion will be part of how we live and lead every day. I hope that when I look around, not just at Lloyds but across corporate organisations, I see more people that look like me, who truly reflect the diversity of the UK

and that we build a culture where everyone feels seen, valued, and empowered.

Community engagement plays a vital role in this journey and I am proud of the work Lloyds does to support it. By building meaningful relationships with the communities we serve, we can better understand their needs, amplify underrepresented voices, and co-create solutions that drive lasting change.

If you could share one message with readers this Black History Month, what would it be?

Your story matters. Your voice matters. Keep showing up, keep speaking up, and keep building the future you want to see. Representation isn't just about being counted, it's about making every moment count.

Take a moment daily to reflect on your mood, stress levels, and wellbeing

By Birmingham Mind

As we approach November and Men's Health Month, it's time to focus our attention on the importance of men's mental health.

Globally, men are still less likely to seek support for mental health concerns, and yet they are disproportionately affected by suicide, substance abuse, and undiagnosed depression.

KEY ADVICE FOR MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Talk Openly: Starting a conversation can be the first and most powerful step. Whether with a friend, family member, or therapist, talking about mental struggles reduces isolation and builds resilience. The Birmingham Mind Helpline operates daily between 9am – 11pm and provides telephone wellbeing advice and emotional support. You can contact the Helpline on 0121 262 3555.

Sometimes, writing things down is the first step to feeling better.

Check in with yourself and others: Take a moment daily to reflect on your mood, stress levels, and overall wellbeing. Take five minutes to think about what makes you happy or brings you joy and acknowledge what is causing you stress, worry or concern. Monitoring your mood and what impacts our mood, can help to identify patterns or triggers when things aren't going so well.

Routine & movement matter: Regular exercise, sleep, and a balanced diet have a significant impact on mental health. It's proven that a short 12-minute walk can lift

your mood, remember to #Take12 when you need to.

Prevention and intervention: All too often, men only think about seeking mental health support when they become significantly unwell. By practising regular self-care, acknowledging when things feel 'off', and prioritising your mental health early, you can avoid more serious issues later on.

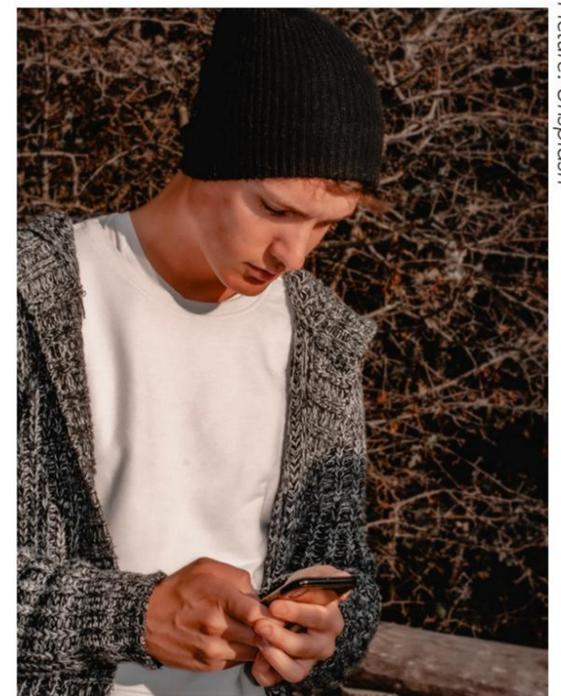
UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Men's Meet-up: Every Thursday 2pm – 3:30pm. An informal, friendly weekly session for men only, looking at men's health issues (mental health and physical health), located at the Wellbeing Hub on Link Street, inside the Bullring and Grand Central
Drop-in Sessions (October, November & December): Confidential, one-on-one chats with trained mental health advocates every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. All events are free and open to men of all backgrounds. Details: birminghammind.org/what-we-do/central-birmingham-wellbeing-hub

LOOKING AHEAD: MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH WINTER

The darker months can intensify feelings of depression, loneliness, and fatigue especially for those who tend to isolate when struggling. How to support your wellbeing this winter:

Enjoy Time Outside (even on rainy days!) Spending joyful time



Picture: Unsplash

outside during daylight hours can give us an immediate boost to our wellbeing. A brisk 15-minute walk, a picnic in the garden or a different dog walking route can provide a natural break from our daily routine.

Connect with friends and family. Whether it's a phone call to a family member, a regular social meet up or a text to a friend, keep in touch with those people who mean the most.

Eat well. Plan your meals and think about what you eat, eating a well-balanced diet can hugely impact our mood.

Set boundaries: Remember, it's okay to say no. Prioritise your own needs and protect your time and energy.

Learn to relax: Spend a few minutes each day focusing on your breath or observing your surroundings. Even a brief pause can help you feel grounded and reduce stress.

Move your body: Physical activity doesn't have to mean a gym session, find what you enjoy. Movement releases endorphins and can be a great mood booster.

Unplug and disconnect: Take a break from screens and social media. Reconnect with nature, read a book, or simply sit and rest your mind.

Check in with yourself: Pause and ask yourself how you're really feeling.

Self-care isn't selfish; it's essential. You can't pour from an empty cup, so make sure you're replenishing yours.

PREFER TO TYPE, NOT TALK?

If speaking out loud feels too daunting, there are plenty of text-based support options available.

Birmingham Mind Webchat: Connect with trained staff online via their website:

Birminghammind.org or text 'SPACE' to 85258 for 24/7 NHS support across Birmingham & Solihull.

Try wellbeing apps to track your mood and manage your mental health.

Save The Date!



Colmore Food Festival to return in July 2026

Colmore BID has confirmed that Birmingham's biggest free-to-attend food festival will return to Victoria Square in **July 2026**.

Now a firm fixture in the city's calendar, Colmore Food Festival will once again bring together the very best of Birmingham's food and drink scene for a weekend of flavour, fun and community spirit. Expect a bustling line-up of traders from across the Business District and beyond, all serving up dishes and drinks at capped prices to ensure the festival stays accessible for everyone.

Alongside the food, the square will come alive with live performances from local musicians, dancers and entertainers, making it a true celebration of Birmingham's culture as well as its cuisine.

Keep an eye on Colmore social for latest date updates and trader announcements... the countdown to Colmore Food Festival 2026 has officially begun!



COLMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT



Snow Hill Interchange
For national and regional rail services, Metro and northwest bound bus services.

Bull Street/Priory Queensway Interchange
For northeast bound bus services.

Moor Street Interchange
For national and regional rail services and southeast bound bus services.

New Street Interchange
For national and regional rail services and southwest bound bus services.

Cathedral Square
The green heart of the city centre around the historic cathedral is a place to relax and enjoy the many cafés and pubs nearby.

Victoria Square
The city's civic heart is home to the Town Hall, Council House and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The square is used all year round for a wide variety of events.

Station entrance open 7am - 7pm

COLMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT