



EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES

BUSINESS AWARDS 26

MEET THE WINNERS

Here's everything you need to know

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EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES BUSINESS AWARDS 26

PUTTING SUFFOLK BUSINESSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



The EADT Business Awards 2026 winners were revealed at a ceremony on July 9. Inset below, EADT editor Anna Starnes at the ceremony
Images: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Suffolk has been my adopted home for almost 10 years, and for the past six months I've had the privilege of leading the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star as editor.

In this role you see the best of the county up close, and one thing stands out: Suffolk doesn't like to boast. People here let their hard work – and their results – speak for themselves.

That's exactly why awards like these matter. They give Suffolk businesses permission to step into the spotlight, to celebrate the ingenuity and talent that might otherwise stay under the radar.

By showcasing those stories beyond East Anglia, we can make sure decision makers understand the scale of what's happening here and recognise the case for future investment.

For a county that punches well above its weight, that recognition really matters.

The EADT Business Awards 2026 event, which took place on Thursday, July 9 at Milsoms Kesgrave Hall and was hosted

Anna Starnes, editor of the East Anglian Daily Times, congratulates the winners of the EADT Business Awards 2026.

by comedian and actor Marcus Brigstocke, was all about recognising the best of the best – businesses and individuals that make Suffolk stand out as a great place to live and work.

This is my first East Anglian Daily Times Business Awards, and I've had the opportunity to help judge one of the categories. That experience gave me a front row view of just how much effort goes into carefully selecting deserving finalists and winners.

It was also a powerful insight into the depth of care and attention behind these values led businesses, and the way they think about their people, their communities and the future of the county.

I've also been hugely

impressed by how many businesses across Suffolk are investing in young people, offering training, apprenticeships and real job opportunities that help the next generation to build their futures here, rather than feeling they have to look elsewhere.

Many of the organisations represented in these pages are not only focused on financial success, but also on the wellbeing and progression of their staff – through training, mentoring and by creating new connections.

Many also provide unique services that people would otherwise have to look much further afield to find. They are rooted in Suffolk, but they think ambitiously about the future.

This year, we are proud to be support East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH), which provides care and support to children,

young people and families, ensuring the best possible quality of life and making every moment count.

We are pleased to announce that, as part of this year's awards, £1,551 was raised for EACH. You can find out more about the incredible work that these funds will help to support on page 14.



Of course, these awards simply wouldn't be possible without our sponsors.

A big thank you to our headline sponsor, Ensors, Part of Azets, as well as our category sponsors and our venue sponsor, Milsoms Kesgrave Hall.

I'd also like to thank our ambassador judges, who work alongside our sponsor judges to help determine this year's worthy finalists.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners. Read on to find out more about them.

THE WINNERS

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■ The 2027 EADT Business Awards open for entries in January. Keep an eye out for updates at eadtbusinessawards.co.uk

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SUFFOLK BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



Left to right: Kate Cotterill, David Scrivener (sponsor – Ensors, part of Azets) and Lucy Hutchings

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Ensors, Part of Azets is an award-winning accountancy firm with more than 130 years in practice serving clients in and around East Anglia.

Backed by the scale and resources of Azets, a UK top 10 accountancy firm, Ensors, Part of Azets' clients and staff members benefit from expertise and technological advancement on a global scale.

Whether you're a large corporate, an owner-managed business or an individual, Ensors, Part of Azets is made up of local experts providing end-to-end accountancy and business advisory services tailored to your unique needs and backed by international strength and progressive technology.

And the winner is... SHE GROWS VEG



She Grows Veg in East Bergholt is on a mission to get more people growing their own food, making it easy for gardeners of all abilities to cultivate natural ingredients.

The company offers everything needed to grow successfully, including open-pollinated vegetable seeds, eco-friendly tools, organic pest control,

natural feeds and gifts.

At the heart of the business is a commitment to making gardening accessible. Every seed packet includes a QR code linking to free, jargon-free sow-and-grow videos, helping customers achieve success from sowing through to harvest.

Alongside its product range, She Grows Veg champions sustainable food production, supports wellbeing through gardening and works to preserve food heritage by promoting traditional vegetable varieties.

The judges praised She Grows Veg's "exceptional example of modern, values-driven Suffolk business".

Recognising the "remarkable commercial growth" the company has achieved in the last two and a half years, including securing double Gold at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show, they said that its achievements "reflect both brand strength and

operational excellence".

Its commitment to meaningful social impact, including its Seeds for Growth charity, which supports social housing estate tenants to create and enjoy their own community gardens, "demonstrates that commercial success and community benefit can go hand in hand".

The judges called She Grows Veg "a well-deserving winner" that "flies the flag for Suffolk".

Speaking at the awards ceremony, director of She Grows Veg Kate Cotterill said: "Suffolk Business of the Year – it's insane!"

She reflected on the journey She Grows Veg has undertaken, saying: "We've been doing this for two and a half years, we've got a fully female team – actually, we did hire some men quite recently – and we're just so proud of the whole team that's helped us to get here."

Kate also spoke about how proud the team is of the ways in which they're supporting others to grow their own vegetables, which she said is "helping people to do something really good in the world."

THE FINALISTS

BRIDGE CLASSIC CARS

Bridge Classic Cars near Woodbridge specialises in classic vehicle restoration, storage and competition.

The business also hosts events and reaches millions through its content platform.

The judges commended its operational excellence, community impact and exceptional facilities, which they said reflects "a clear attention to detail and a strong commitment to quality".

ICS

Previously known as Ipswich Computer Services, ICS provides managed IT support to businesses across East Anglia, alongside services including business SIMs, website design and SEO.

The judges praised ICS' "steady and sustainable growth through diversification and a strong people-first service model" and called it a "standout in the field" of the IT sector.



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BUSINESSPERSON OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...

GEORGE AGNEW – ROUGHAM ESTATE



George Agnew is partner and owner of the 3,000-acre Rougham Estate near Bury St Edmunds.

The rural estate has grown its turnover and visitor numbers in the last three years since the addition of Roots Cafe and the Rougham Estate Shop.

Other business functions include arable farming, events, Christmas tree sales and container storage.

The estate manages its 650 acres of woodland with both conservation and timber production in mind, overseen by the Rougham Estate Trust, a charity that will eventually inherit the whole estate.

It also owns and lets out 60 homes, ranging from cottages to unique buildings like the Roundhouse and the Gatehouse at Rougham Hall.

Blackthorpe Barn is the public face of the estate and includes a 16th-century barn used for events, an award-winning lifestyle shop, Roots Cafe, a meeting space and a sunken garden.

The venue hosts seasonal events, such as pick your own pumpkins and sunflowers, while the cafe employs most of the estate's staff and supports many local suppliers.

Rougham's seasonal Country Christmas shop attracts 100,000 visitors each year.

The judges felt George came across as "a commercially astute and visionary leader who has



George Agnew and Sarah Chambers (East Anglian Daily Times), who presented the award

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

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ESTATES

ABOUT THE SPONSOR

For more than 40 years, Churchmanor Estates has been one of the foremost commercial property developers in the East of England.

Through joint ventures with landowners, Churchmanor has helped to unlock the development potential of their landholdings and developed new premises for local and national businesses.

The company has developed more than three million square feet of commercial accommodation, including research and development parks, business parks, retail and leisure centres and major town centre regeneration projects.

rebuilt and grown the business with discipline and long-term thinking".

George said: "The award may be for 'businessperson', but really, it's about the whole business – the 50 or 60 people who work for us, and we're so proud of them. We see them as a family, and we all work together.

"We're providing a lot of employment in the local area, and we're teaching people a lot of skills. We're supporting the environment, and we also support charities locally. Our own charity is providing environmental and historical research in the local area."

■ This category was not judged by Churchmanor Estates.

THE FINALISTS

BRIAN KEANE – CAMERON VENTURES GROUP

Brian Keane founded Cameron Ventures Group, a Suffolk-based hotel business, in 1999.

With 14 hotels, the company is still led by Brian with the support of his wife Kelly and their team of 150 employees.

It focuses on acquiring underperforming hotels and turning them into profitable businesses.

Brian came across as "a confident, commercially astute leader", according to the judges.

KATE COTTERILL – SHE GROWS VEG

Kate Cotterill is co-owner and director of She Grows Veg, a heirloom seed supplier in East Bergholt.

With a mission to get as many people as possible growing their own food, the business sells open-pollinated vegetable seeds, eco-friendly garden tools, organic pest control, natural feeds and a range of gardening gifts.

The judges said Kate has "a strong commitment to both people and business growth".

KIRSTIE WRIGHT – WS TRAINING

Kirstie Wright is chief executive of Ipswich-based WS Training, which offers government-funded training and a wide range of commercial courses for employers across the UK.

The business also supports disadvantaged learners and young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The judges described Kirstie as "an inspirational and values-driven leader".

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CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE AWARD

And the winner is...
**NEWMEDICA
SUFFOLK**

Newmedica
Eye Health Clinics | Surgical Centres

Newmedica Suffolk is part of the national Newmedica network, founded in 2007 by an ophthalmologist and a patient with a shared ambition to transform access to NHS ophthalmology services.

Their goal was to create more efficient care pathways that reduce waiting times and improve access to treatment.

In 2016, Newmedica became part of the Specsavers Group, further strengthening its ability to deliver high-quality, accessible eye care across the UK.

Since opening its purpose-built ophthalmology centres in Ipswich in 2020 and Bury St Edmunds in 2024, Newmedica Suffolk has focused on providing consultant-led eye care in welcoming environments designed around patient comfort, dignity and reassurance.

The Suffolk partnership is led by consultant ophthalmologists and clinical partners Usman Hussain and Raj Hanspal, alongside operational director Rosemary Smith.

Together with 50 local employees and specialist central support teams, they are united by a commitment to helping people protect and preserve their sight.

Newmedica Suffolk provides a wide range of services, including cataract surgery, YAG laser treatment, oculoplastics, age-related macular degeneration care, glaucoma monitoring and anterior segment procedures.

The judges said: "The strength and consistency of independently validated patient satisfaction data, alongside clear examples of feedback informing service



The Newmedica Suffolk team with Jonathan Denby (sponsor - Greater Anglia) on the far right

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

improvement, strongly differentiated this entry.

"We were particularly impressed by how clinical excellence, staff empowerment and patient dignity are embedded across every stage of the care pathway."

Usman Hussain said: "This award means everything. The team works so hard for our patients and for our community, seeing this really validates all that hard work."

Raj Hanspal added: "We've always set out to deliver the best possible care that we can."

"What we want to do is redefine excellence in eye care, and I really feel this recognises that – so we're super proud."

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Greater Anglia is passionate about delivering excellent customer service and ensuring that the railways play their full part in helping our region to be both economically prosperous and a wonderful place to live.

Greater Anglia is therefore committed to consistently raising customer service standards.

It has a complete fleet of brand-new trains operating on all of its routes. Not only have they transformed the travelling environment, with additional and more comfortable seating, but they are also consistently delivering excellent punctuality and reliability.

This £1.4 billion investment programme, the largest ever investment in trains in East Anglia, has helped make our railways some of the best performing in the UK.

THE FINALISTS

GIPPING CONSTRUCTION

Founded in 2004, Baylham-based Gipping Construction is a leading contractor serving both public and private sectors.

Its portfolio includes projects covering heritage restoration, healthcare, education, commercial and residential.

The judges said: "Gipping Construction demonstrates a highly mature approach to customer excellence, underpinned by robust systems, accreditation and a genuinely people-led culture."

HOME INSTEAD

Home Instead provides high-quality home care across Ipswich, Felixstowe, Woodbridge and surrounding areas, with expansion planned.

Supporting older people to live independently at home, services include personal care, companionship, home help, live-in and end-of-life care.

The judges said the "clear alignment between staff retention, consistent care teams and high client satisfaction was particularly strong".

HOME-START SUFFOLK

Home-Start Suffolk is a Martlesham Heath-based charity supporting families facing challenges.

Working from pregnancy until a child reaches 12, trained volunteers and staff provide help that builds confidence, strengthens relationships and improves home life.

The judges commended "the depth of community engagement and the organisation's ability to give families a genuine voice in shaping services".

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at the EADT Business Awards 2026.*

greateranglia



EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...
PADDY & SCOTT'S



Paddy & Scott's
 fuelling ambition

Paddy & Scott's is a coffee brand on a mission to prove that coffee can be a force for good.

Supplying hospitality, leisure, travel and retail partners across the UK from its Ipswich Waterfront headquarters, the business places people at the heart of its operations, combining commercial success with positive social impact.

Following employee feedback in 2019, the company undertook a significant cultural transformation, strengthening leadership, improving communication and creating a clearer strategic direction. This work resulted in a team-written manifesto centred on farmers, people and the planet, ensuring its values remain embedded throughout the business.

Through long-term partnerships in Suffolk, Kenya and Brazil, Paddy & Scott's supports fair pay, regenerative farming and sustainable livelihoods. It also invests in community initiatives including tree planting, school hall construction, health services and local events, focusing on creating lasting change.

At the centre of its culture is the 'Heads, Heart and Hands' development framework, which prioritises wellbeing, purpose and empowerment, helping employees feel connected to the company's mission and success.

The judges said Paddy & Scott's had built "a genuinely embedded people-first culture that goes well beyond surface-level HR initiatives".

They added that the 'Heads, Heart and Hands' framework was "a perfect example" of how the business has used thoughtful communication and employee



The Paddy & Scott's team with Craig Fiddaman (sponsor - Ashtons Legal) on the far left

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

engagement to drive commercial success while retaining a strong focus on its purpose.

Jon Reed of Paddy & Scott's said: "From my perspective, me and Zoe Hill bought the business two years ago, and we had one KPI: we don't care about the money, we don't care about the growth, we care about the people. So winning this award is wonderful."

Neil Wilson, also of Paddy & Scott's, said: "It's absolutely incredible to receive this recognition. Jon and Zoe have worked tirelessly to put people at the heart of this business, and that's what makes Paddy & Scott's such a special place to work."

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Ashtons Legal is an award-winning law firm supporting businesses and individuals at every stage of their journey.

The company's business client group advises organisations on a range of matters, including transactions, employment, regulatory compliance, disputes and risk management.

With offices across East Anglia and Leeds, Ashtons combines regional insight with national capability.

Alongside its business services, the firm offers trusted legal support to individuals, including property, family and private wealth matters.

THE FINALISTS

EAST COAST COLLEGE

East Coast College provides further education, technical training and degree-level opportunities across campuses in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth.

With specialist maritime, energy and offshore training facilities, it is a recognised skills hub for the region.

Judges praised the college's "impressive" and passionate team for finding genuine ways to "connect, inspire and motivate their workforce".

HOME INSTEAD

Home Instead delivers home care services to older people across Ipswich, Felixstowe, Woodbridge and surrounding areas.

Alongside care provision, it supports local communities through dementia cafés and advice sessions.

Judges praised its "clear identity", describing it as a "positive, supportive and engaging employer" with leaders who genuinely care about employees.

HARWICH HAVEN AUTHORITY

Harwich Haven Authority (HHA) operates one of the UK's largest trust ports, supporting a gateway vital to the national economy.

Reinvesting surplus profits for stakeholder benefit, it combines commercial success with community impact.

Judges described HHA as "a purpose-driven, community-rooted organisation with genuine strengths in recognition, wellbeing and apprenticeship investment".

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

And the winner is...
**GROUNDWORK
EAST**



Groundwork East is helping shape a greener, fairer future for Suffolk and the wider region.

As an independent charity within the Federation of Groundwork Trusts, it brings people, places and nature together through practical action, ensuring environmental progress benefits everyone.

Based in Henley, its mission is to create a future where communities and nature thrive side by side by delivering impact across three connected areas:

- People – empowering residents with new skills, improved wellbeing and opportunities that support greener ways of living.
- Places – strengthening communities through green and social infrastructure and supporting responsible business practice.
- Planet – inspiring environmental action, reducing carbon and waste, and restoring natural habitats to boost biodiversity.

Groundwork East collaborates with councils, businesses, voluntary organisations and local residents to design and deliver programmes rooted in local need.

Projects range from community environmental improvements and youth skills development to helping businesses become more sustainable.

Since 1985, the organisation has been guided by a simple principle: Give people the right tools and bring partners together, and lasting change becomes possible.

Today, that ethos underpins



Left to right: Anna Martin-Edward, Phil Bibby and Samantha Freelove (sponsor - Sizewell C)

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

innovative, place-based initiatives that tackle climate resilience, nature recovery, wellbeing and opportunity.

The judges said Groundwork East has “a clear and impressive approach to funded programmes, supported by monthly impact reports and a strong team spanning community, landscape and business services”.

Anna Martin Edward from Groundwork East said: “Really this is a recognition of all the team’s work, what we do and what we’ve done to reduce our environmental impact as an organisation.

“We’ll keep doing more to improve communities and their lives.”

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Sizewell C
The power of good for Britain

ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Sizewell C is the new nuclear power station being built in Suffolk which will supply six million homes with low-carbon electricity for at least 60 years.

The project received planning consent in July 2022 and formal construction commenced in early 2024 when it triggered its Development Consent Order.

The new power station will deliver 1,500 apprenticeships and 7,900 jobs at the peak of construction.

Sizewell C has pledged that at least a third of the workforce will come from the local area – with 500 jobs pledged for residents in both Ipswich and Lowestoft alike.

Once the power station is operational, it will support 900 local jobs.

THE FINALISTS

MARITIME TRANSPORT

Felixstowe-based Maritime Transport provides logistics services to global brands across shipping, retail, manufacturing and consumer goods.

Its sustainability strategy includes investment in electric vehicles, high-powered charging infrastructure and lower-carbon road and rail freight.

Judges praised the company’s “senior level commitment to shift its fleet away from diesel” and its pragmatic approach to greener operations.

NUTRIWOLDS RAW

Nutriwolds Raw produces ethical raw food for cats and dogs at its Lowestoft base.

Sustainability is embedded throughout the business, from recyclable packaging, solar panels and battery storage, to an electric fork truck and a fleet of electric delivery vans.

Judges highlighted the team’s “passion for good quality, traceable raw food for dogs and cats”, and praised its significant investment in renewable energy.

THE REFILL SHED

East Bergholt-based The Refill Shed offers affordable refill and plastic-free household products, encouraging customers to reuse containers.

The business also supports the local community through charitable collection schemes and pop-up events.

Judges praised the connections with other small businesses and the dedication behind the single-person enterprise and its passion for reducing single-use plastic.

Sizewell C
The power of good for Britain

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GROWTH BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...

ICS



Founded 28 years ago, ICS (formerly Ipswich Computer Services) delivers managed IT support to businesses across East Anglia.

Since Craig Starling's promotion to director two years ago, the company has experienced significant growth, expanding to a team of 15 and supporting more than 300 business-to-business (B2B) clients across a wide range of sectors.

Providing a comprehensive suite of IT, telephony and digital services, ICS enables clients to manage multiple business technology needs through a single trusted provider.

In response to customer demand, the business has expanded beyond traditional IT support to include business SIMs, website design and development, and SEO services. This strategic diversification has strengthened ICS's position as a long-term technology partner.

Despite this growth, ICS remains committed to its people-first approach. Rather than relying on impersonal ticketing systems, clients can speak directly with a dedicated account manager, ensuring continuity and consistent support.

Contract customers also benefit from bi-monthly site visits as part of their service package. The strength of these relationships is reflected in client loyalty, with more than one-third of customers having worked with ICS for more than 20 years.

The judges said: "ICS has seen steady and sustainable growth through diversification and a strong people-first service model that's unusual in the IT sector and makes them a stand-out."

"Growth has been supported



Left to right: Craig Starling, Tim Goulding and Catherine Johnson (sponsor - Suffolk Chamber of Commerce)

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is the leading independent voice of the county's business community.

Through high-quality networking, events, training and guidance, it helps businesses build connections and access new opportunities.

Its policy and advocacy work ensures Suffolk's priorities are heard at regional and national level, influencing decisions on infrastructure, skills, planning and investment.

With a long history of supporting businesses of all sizes and sectors, it provides practical support, trusted representation and a strong platform for businesses to contribute to the county's economic future.

by investment in scalable systems, recruitment and marketing, alongside clear leadership and strategic planning.

"ICS also evidences strong local engagement and staff development, with plans for further expansion over the next three to five years grounded in service quality rather than volume alone."

Craig Starling said: "For me, this award highlights the hard work we've put in over the last few years, and the efforts of the whole team."

Tim Goulding added: "This award just shows that caring about what you do makes a difference."

THE FINALISTS

EAST GREEN ENERGY

Established in Melton in 2007, East Green Energy is one of Suffolk's longest-established renewable energy specialists.

The company designs, supplies and installs renewable technologies for homes, farms and businesses across East Anglia.

The judges praised the firm's successful transition away from government subsidies towards a "values-led, customer-focused model, prioritising appropriate, cost-saving energy solutions".

EVOLVE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Founded in 2020 and based in Ipswich, Evolve Business Solutions provides managed print services and has achieved strong growth despite market challenges.

With 18 employees and a robust local supply chain, it supports a diverse client base.

Judges commended its "hyper-local, customer-centric strategy", as well as the personalised service, rapid response times and high customer retention.

VIVO CLEAN

Ipswich-based Vivo Clean has developed a full-service cleaning business offering window cleaning, gutter clearing, jet washing and specialist services.

Starting as a virtual office venture, it has grown into a structured commercial operation serving organisations across Suffolk and beyond.

The judges praised the investment in staff training and the use of technology to improve efficiency.



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Together, we grow and influence.**

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POSITIVE IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY AWARD

And the winner is...

21 YOUNG HEARTS



Launched in August 2025, 21 Young Hearts in Martlesham Heath was established to encourage, empower and support young people with disabilities into the workplace through meaningful employment and volunteering opportunities.

Operating as a vibrant community cafe, it provides a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where young people can develop valuable life skills, build confidence and gain practical workplace experience.

While customers enjoy quality coffee, homemade cakes and excellent service, the cafe delivers a unique training programme tailored to the needs and aspirations of each trainee.

Every individual receives personalised support from the care team, ensuring they are encouraged to learn, develop and thrive at a pace that suits them.

The training programme focuses on building transferable skills that can be applied both within the hospitality sector and in a wide range of other employment settings.

The ultimate goal is to help each trainee move into paid employment if they choose, demonstrating that disability should never be viewed as a barrier to opportunity.

Beyond the cafe, 21 Young Hearts is making a wider impact through outreach work that benefits the local community while creating additional opportunities for trainees to gain experience and employment.

The judges described 21 Young



Left to right: Justin Galliford (sponsor - Norse Group) with Sharon Hobbs, Maisie Capon, Kyle Hobbs, Emma Pulford, Jo Reeder and Stuart Hobbs from 21 Young Hearts

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Norse Group is an East Anglian success story.

Wholly owned by Norfolk County Council, the company provides a wide range of services to the public and private sectors, including highways, facilities management, transport, housing repairs and environmental services.

Norse operates across the UK, bringing jobs and financial benefits to the East of England.

With a turnover of almost £400 million, the group employs more than 9,000 people.

Norse Group's growth has been fuelled by its development of a ground-breaking partnership model, establishing joint ventures with local authorities in England and Wales.

Hearts as "a very special place" and a "worthy winner".

They praised the "passion and drive" behind the organisation's mission and how the leadership team complemented one another.

Stuart Hobbs of 21 Young Hearts said: "This is a huge, huge thing. Not only just for us, but for all the people we support. We've had 12 trainees that are trained. Three of them are now fully employed. It means we can also show that what we're doing makes a difference."

Sharon Hobbs, also of 21 Young Hearts, added: "For me, it's about challenging disability, challenging perspectives, changing lives, and above all, we need to be more kind."

THE FINALISTS

1 OAK COMMUNITY MEALS

Based in Sudbury, 1 Oak Community Meals is a not-for-profit meals-on-wheels service providing freshly prepared meals to older and vulnerable residents.

Alongside nutritious food, each delivery offers valuable social interaction and reassurance.

The judges were impressed by the organisation's "passion and drive to step in when a gap appeared" in community support.

BME SUFFOLK SUPPORT GROUP

BME Suffolk Support Group (BSSG) is a community organisation supporting individuals and families from black and minority ethnic communities across Ipswich and West Suffolk.

Established in 2018, it provides free practical advice and wellbeing support to promote integration and inclusion.

Judges noted the significant need for its services and praised its "important work".

ROSEDALE FUNERAL HOME

Rosedale Funeral Home supports families through bereavement, while offering extensive community and professional support services.

With Suffolk branches in Halesworth, Beccles and Bungay, its work includes bereavement programmes, suicide bereavement support and specialist training for professionals.

Judges praised its innovative approach, describing it as "not the norm for a funeral home".



21 YOUNG HEARTS

Launched in August 2025, 21 Young Hearts in Martlesham Heath was established to encourage, empower and support young people with disabilities into the workplace through meaningful employment and volunteering opportunities.



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POSITIVE IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY AWARD 2026

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...
MOTORDESK



MotorDesk is an Ipswich-based SaaS (software as a service) business providing management software designed specifically for independent motor vehicle dealerships.

Its platform brings together stock management, sales and invoicing, checkout and deal building, automotive reconditioning, marketing and social media automation, lead management and communications in a fully integrated, user-friendly system.

Built around the real-world needs of dealers, MotorDesk helps businesses improve operational efficiency, lead conversion and stock visibility.

By focusing on a previously underserved part of the market, the company has successfully competed with larger, long-established providers.

The company's growth has been driven by quality of product rather than scale of resources.

Founder Neil Skirrow has utilised automation of internal operations as well as full automation within the software to maximise business growth and customer retention without needing corresponding resources, keeping MotorDesk small in size but highly impactful.

With a focus on customer partnership, continuous improvement and long-term sustainability, MotorDesk is well positioned for future expansion.

The judges said MotorDesk provides a solution to a "very clear problem within the car dealership sector, observed first-hand by the business owner".



Left to right: Lucy Risebrow, Neil Skirrow and Tamara McKenzie (sponsor - LOCALiQ)

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

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LOCALiQ

ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Established in 2018, LOCALiQ is an award-winning digital marketing agency with a passion for simplifying the complexities of marketing for UK businesses.

Its digital marketing experts help drive results across multiple channels, increasing customers' online visibility and high-quality leads to grow their business.

As part of Newsquest Media Group, the UK's leading local publisher, LOCALiQ combines best-in-class marketing technology with award-winning journalism and community connections from 200-plus news brands across the UK, making it the second-largest local media company in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

They praised a "business solution rooted deep in technology" and highlighted the founder's achievement in driving early sales growth while simultaneously developing the product.

The judges described MotorDesk as "a thriving enterprise with a strong customer focus" and "an excellent example of clear insight, problem diagnosis and delivery to market with the end user top of mind".

Lucy Risebrow from MotorDesk said: "This is an amazing achievement, earned by a brilliant team led by Neil."

Neil Skirrow added: "Absolutely – a fantastic team, who have a lot of determination."

THE FINALISTS

SHE GROWS VEG

East Bergholt-based She Grows Veg is on a mission to make home-grown food accessible to everyone. Providing heirloom vegetable seeds, eco-friendly tools, natural feeds and organic pest control, it supports gardeners from seed to table.

Every seed packet comes with a QR code linking to jargon-free sow and grow videos.

The judges said She Grows Veg has "added a new sense of energy and vibrancy into the seed market".

STUDIOFLEX

StudioFlex combines personal training-level results with the motivation of group fitness.

Operating from Ipswich, Woodbridge and Stowmarket, it specialises in instructor-led reformer pilates and boutique fitness classes.

Its community-focused approach extends beyond exercise, with a popular café providing a social hub.

The judges said this "vibrant and interesting" business has "a real community feel".

SUFFOLK PLANT CENTRE

Established in 2016, Suffolk Plant Centre has grown from a small plant centre into a thriving retail garden destination at Pettistree.

With a 55-acre on-site nursery and an additional 100 acres of UK-based nurseries, it offers a broad range of homegrown bedding plants, shrubs, perennials, exotic plants and Christmas trees.

The judges said Suffolk Plant Centre is a business "built on a passion for people and plants".



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*Source: Newsquest data 2021

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START UP BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...

**SHE GROWS
VEG**



Based in East Bergholt, She Grows Veg aims to encourage more people to grow their own food through the supply of heirloom vegetable seeds, gardening products and educational resources.

Since launching, the business has developed a community of growers across the UK, ranging from first-time gardeners to experienced allotment holders.

The company offers open-pollinated vegetable seeds alongside eco-friendly gardening tools, natural feeds, organic pest control products and gardening gifts.

Its focus is on supporting customers throughout the growing process, from seed selection to harvest. Its products and resources are aimed at growers of all experience levels, whether gardening in a small urban space, an allotment or a larger garden.

Education forms a key part of the business model. Every seed packet includes a QR code linking to sowing and growing videos, while an online library of guides, recipes and resources provides practical information.

A network of trial growers located across the UK tests varieties in different conditions, helping the business provide informed growing advice.

She Grows Veg also promotes heirloom varieties as a way of preserving food heritage and supports sustainable food growing practices.

The judges said: "She Grows Veg has achieved remarkable



Left to right: Kate Cotterill and Lucy Hutchings of She Grows Veg with Mary Gleave (sponsor - Suffolk New College)
Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

growth in just 2.5 years, scaling to 48 employees and securing double Gold at the Chelsea Flower Show, reflecting exceptional leadership and ambition."

Kate Cotterill of She Grows Veg said: "It's amazing to win this award. We've only been doing this for two and a half years. We thought it was an amazing idea, and it's taken off faster than we ever thought it would. It has been incredible."

Lucy Hutchings, also of She Grows Veg, added: "It's been such a whirlwind. Only two and a half years ago, it was just the two of us in a tiny office. Now we're here with our team. This is more than we ever dreamed."

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Suffolk New College is a multi-award-winning institution offering a diverse range of career-focused courses across multiple campuses in Suffolk.

Its state-of-the-art facilities include the Net Zero Skills Centre, Health Science Campus and Tech Campus in Ipswich, and it provides land-based programmes, construction and training from Suffolk Rural at Otley.

The college also has On the Coast provision in Halesworth and Leiston, and it will soon launch College on the Coast with Sizewell C in Leiston and Suffolk New College Cornhill, a new campus for adult courses in central Ipswich.

THE FINALISTS

21 YOUNG HEARTS

Based in Martlesham Heath, 21 Young Hearts is a community interest company supporting young people with disabilities into the workforce.

Through its cafe, it provides employment and volunteering opportunities that build life and workplace skills in an inclusive environment.

The judges praised the organisation's "unique" combination of reducing isolation while empowering young people.

ALL ABOUT HEARING

All About Hearing is an independent, family-run hearing care provider serving communities across Suffolk.

Founded by Karen Finch and Matthew Coward, the company offers hearing assessments, hearing aids, earwax removal and tinnitus support from its Kesgrave practice and outreach clinics.

Its investment in education for new audiologists is "a great opportunity for the next generation", said the judges.

CURIOUS RETREATS

Founded in 2023, Woodbridge-based Curious Retreats is a holiday letting agency offering tailored stays across a portfolio of Suffolk properties.

Run by Tim Ripman and Tim Cook alongside their partners, Jules and Laura, the business combines accommodation with additional services.

The judges praised its enhanced guest experiences and "inspiring" family-run business model, which gives it "a personal and authentic feel".



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MEDIUM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...
**BRIDGE
CLASSIC CARS**



Founded in 2004 by father and son Craig and Gordon Ranson, Bridge Classic Cars has grown from a small vehicle sales business into an award-winning, internationally recognised classic car specialist.

Today, the Woodbridge-based company combines traditional restoration and maintenance expertise with a modern approach to marketing and media.

At its core is a commitment to high-quality, in-house restorations, delivering detailed and sympathetic work across a wide range of classic vehicles.

Alongside this, the business has developed a successful competition platform, giving enthusiasts the opportunity to win sought-after classic cars for only a few pounds.

Recent years have seen significant expansion, with secure vehicle storage facilities, a dedicated members' lounge for events and community activities, and a thriving media arm producing daily automotive content. This content reaches millions of people each month, helping introduce new audiences to the classic car world.

Bridge Classic Cars has evolved beyond restoration into an automotive content platform, events venue and community-focused brand. This diversified approach has enabled continued growth in a changing marketplace while helping preserve and promote classic motoring for future generations.

The judges said: "Bridge Classic Cars distinguished itself with the way it combines traditional craftsmanship with modern marketing, creating a unique and scalable business model."



Left to right: Anthony Carroll, Gordon Ranson and Josh Yasar (sponsor - Pound Gates Chartered Insurance Brokers)
Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

"We were also impressed by the operational excellence of the business. The facilities are of an exceptionally high standard, reflecting a clear attention to detail and a strong commitment to quality."

"Overall, Bridge Classic Cars represents a modern, innovative and well-led business that Suffolk can be extremely proud to have based in the county."

Gordon Ranson said: "Winning this award means a lot to me – we're forever evolving, which is probably what's made us a medium-sized company."

"We have a passion for cars, restoring them and bringing them back to life. We love what we do."

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ABOUT THE SPONSOR

As an independent chartered insurance broker, Pound Gates is dedicated to delivering certainty and peace of mind.

With deep expertise and tailored solutions, it works best when in close partnership with its clients.

By combining its knowledge with clients' goals, success is created together, guided by the values that drive Pound Gates.

The company's roots are deeply embedded in Suffolk, where it has been a trusted partner to local businesses for more than 35 years.

From its Suffolk base, Pound Gates has expanded to meet the needs of the local business community and now provides services to clients both nationally and internationally.

THE FINALISTS

BOX WORX

Box Worx, based in Melton near Woodbridge, transforms shipping containers into bespoke buildings, structures and products.

Founded in 2021, it employs 15 staff and provides everything from design and engineering to installation.

Judges praised its technical expertise and growth, adding that Box Worx is "modern and ambitious" in its combination of craftsmanship, innovation and strong leadership.

COMBAT2COFFEE

Combat2Coffee is a community interest company supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the armed forces community and their families.

Based in Ipswich and founded by veteran Nigel Seaman, it reinvests profits from coffee sales into support initiatives.

The judges said it stood out for its "unique blend of commercial enterprise and powerful social impact, delivering meaningful and measurable outcomes".

VIVO CLEAN

Vivo Clean is an Ipswich-based cleaning company providing a wide range of services across the region and neighbouring counties.

Operating from dedicated premises with a fleet of vehicles, it focuses on quality, training and safety.

The judges said: "Vivo Clean is a strong example of a business successfully modernising its sector, combining commercial focus with operational excellence."

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LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

And the winner is...
SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE



Suffolk New College

Suffolk New College (SNC) is one of the county's largest businesses.

Principal and CEO, Alan Pease, is a member of Ipswich's major business leaders' group, and the college is an active patron of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

The college has a community of 6,500 people and is a leading local employer, with 700 staff working across campuses in Ipswich, Otley, Halesworth and Leiston.

College on the Coast, the new Leiston campus funded by Sizewell C, hit national headlines last year and represents an unprecedented private sector investment in further education (FE).

This is a major growth opportunity, enabling the college to create a flagship campus developing skills for Sizewell C and the wider region from 2027.

The more recent announcement of a new adult learning centre in the heart of Ipswich continues the college's ambitious growth programme.

In 2025, SNC joined the Chartered Institution of Further Education (a Russell Group for the FE sector) based upon outstanding performance – the only college in the New Anglia region to have been admitted.

This was reinforced by Suffolk New College recording the best qualification achievement rate of any FE college in Suffolk and Norfolk later that year.

The judges highlighted the "excellent work" Suffolk New College is undertaking to improve education for learners across its colleges.



Left to right: Mary Gleave, Marianne Flack, Abi Thompson, Sumita Kundu and Alan Pease of Suffolk New College with Graham Mummery (sponsor - Larking Gowen)

Image: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

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Chartered Accountants & Business Advisors

ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Larking Gowen, Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors, is a proudly local, independent top 50 UK accountancy firm, serving communities across Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk.

The firm's values – delivering exceptional client service, investing in its people and giving back to local communities – are at the heart of everything it does.

From audit and VAT to corporate transactions, business advice and personal tax, the firm provides tailored expertise across a wide range of services. It also has sector specialists supporting businesses in tourism, farming, medicine and not-for-profit.

Larking Gowen's experienced team is dedicated to helping clients secure their future and achieve their goals.

THE FINALISTS

BREHENY CIVIL ENGINEERING

Breheny Civil Engineering is a privately owned, family-run civil engineering contractor.

For more than 60 years it has delivered infrastructure that underpins communities across East Anglia and the wider UK.

Headquartered in Suffolk, it has 340 directly employed staff and delivers more than 300 projects each year.

The judges were impressed by Breheny's significant "care and passion for its people".

MARITIME TRANSPORT

When John Williams acquired Maritime Transport in 2001, the business was a relatively small container haulier.

Over the following two decades, through investment, innovation and growth, Maritime Transport has become one of the UK's foremost integrated logistics businesses.

The judges said Maritime Transport has expanded into "a leading player in the logistics sector".

NEWMEDICA SUFFOLK

Newmedica Suffolk operates as a joint venture partnership led by consultant ophthalmologists and clinical partners Usman Hussain and Raj Hanspal, and operational director Rosemary Smith.

Its 50 employees share one purpose: helping people protect and preserve their sight.

The judges said they felt a "real passion" from the leadership for its people and partners, as well as its clients and customers.



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AWARDS CELEBRATION RAISES VITAL FUNDS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The chosen charity for this year's EADT Business Awards is East Anglia Children's Hospices, which is carrying out a major expansion at its Ipswich site.

Each year, the EADT Business Awards selects a charity to support at the annual awards ceremony, and this year the selected organisation is East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH).

A total of £1,551 was raised for EACH at this year's awards, and the charity also had representatives at the awards evening on July 9 so guests could learn more about the charity's vital work.

EACH provides care and support to children, young people and families, ensuring the best possible quality of life and making every moment count.

It has three hospices which are happy, homely places for children, and dependable, supportive and restful spaces for families to be families.

Care is also provided in the family home, in hospital and in the community.

EACH supports both bereaved and non-bereaved families, and its services include expert nursing care and short breaks, symptom management, family activities and events, physical therapies and wellbeing support.

It also provides care at end of life, which is planned and coordinated to ensure children are as comfortable as possible and families have everything they need to feel prepared.

In addition, it offers bereavement support and practical help in the family home.

More than 700 children,



EACH provides care and support to children, young people and their families. Below, the EACH Treehouse expansion project is underway

Images: EACH

young people and family members are currently receiving care and support from EACH, including around 180 at The Treehouse, EACH's Ipswich base, which opened for care in 2011 and was officially opened by HRH The Princess of Wales in 2012.

As well as bedrooms for children, the hospice has accommodation for families, as well as a sensory room, music studio, play areas, a sensory garden and specialist outdoor play equipment.

This year marks the start of an exciting new chapter for The Treehouse, with a major expansion project now underway.

The development will include a larger hydrotherapy pool, a

wellbeing and therapies suite and an expanded, separate activity area for care services.

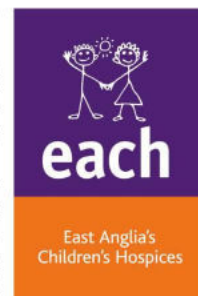
The plans also include a dedicated space for teenagers, an additional bedroom and a larger kitchen and dining area.

EACH relies on voluntary

donations for the majority of its income, and every year needs to raise around £8 million from donations and fundraising and £9.8 million in retail income. It only receives 15% of its income from the government.

■ To make a donation to EACH as part of the awards, scan the QR code or visit justgiving.com/page/eadtbusinessawards2026

■ For more information on on EACH, visit each.org.uk



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THE STARS OF SUFFOLK

The EADT Business Awards ceremony at Milsoms Kesgrave Hall was a night of celebration for Suffolk Business.



Images: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY





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