



**BUSINESS  
BOARD  
NETWORK**



## **Business Board Chairs Biographies 2025**

**Mark Bretton MBE TD DL**  
**Business Board Network**



Mark was awarded an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours List 2023 for services to business, the economy and to charity, particularly during Covid-19.

He is an independent consultant with over 40 years' of wide-ranging business experience, including in several high-profile Government programmes.

Mark was a Managing Director (Partner) in the leadership team of the professional services firm Accenture and before that worked for Plessey, Siemens, Royal Mail and Tata. He sat on the Business Leaders' Council of the charity Teach First for 13 years and is an Ambassador for Home Start Herts.

Mark has an MBA in Export Management and International Business from the University of London Business School, and a BSc Econ (Hons) in Management Studies. He was a Royal Signals Reserve Officer (Major) and holds a Territorial Decoration. Mark was a member of the Secretary of State for BEIS' Levelling Up Taskforce, of the Minister for Local Government's Economic Recovery Working Group and the Business Action Council, all focused on helping the country grow out of the Covid-19 crisis. Mark joined the Hertfordshire LEP Board as Business Representative and Chair Designate in January 2016, and was Chair from June 2016 until March 2023.

[www.businessboardnetwork.co.uk](http://www.businessboardnetwork.co.uk)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Bob Beveridge**  
**Berkshire**



Bob has a diverse business career in both large organisations and SMEs within the consumer goods and technology sectors and has lived in Berkshire for 39 years.

Bob spent 12 years at Mars Chocolate in Slough, in finance and sales roles, ultimately becoming pan-European Head of Finance.

After five years with United Biscuits he moved to the technology sector becoming CFO of Cable & Wireless Communications plc.

After two further roles in the technology sector he returned to consumer goods as CFO of McBride plc, manufacturer of private label household products. Since 2010 he has been a portfolio non-executive director across a diverse range of business sectors: healthcare, technology, manufacturing and food.

[www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk)

**Andrew Smith OBE DL**  
**Buckinghamshire**



Andrew always wanted to work in the film industry, then after being a civil servant, having a stint in politics, starting up his own business and training to be a scuba diving instructor, his dream came true and he went to work for Pinewood in 2008.

As Director of Corporate Affairs, Andrew has been instrumental in the development of the Pinewood site and development of the international reputation of the studio and in particular in developing strong investment links.

A Board member of Buckinghamshire LEP until its closure in 2024, Andrew was instrumental in guiding and supporting the growth of the LEP and his knowledge of the film and creative arts sector has been invaluable in the development of this growth area for Buckinghamshire. Andrew is now the Vice-Chair of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board.

He is passionate about allowing everybody opportunity, especially the long-term unemployed and NEETs.

[www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/business/strategic-growth-investment-and-regeneration/](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/business/strategic-growth-investment-and-regeneration/)

## Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025

**Al Kingsley**  
**Cambridgeshire &  
Peterborough**



Al has served as a Board member since January 2020 and was appointed chair in August 2023.

Al is the group CEO of NetSupport, an award-winning technology company which develops software for both the education and corporate markets. NetSupport has grown to support over 20 million users in 110 countries around the world.

Passionate about education being the key to unlocking personal and economic growth, Al is chair of Hampton Academies Trust in Peterborough as well as the independent chair of the region's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Board. Al also sits on the Regional Schools Directors Advisory Board for the East of England supporting Academies across the region. He also received a civic award in 2020 from Peterborough City council.

Alongside authoring numerous books, Al writes and speaks internationally on the effective use of digital and educational technology, growth, governance and leadership. He is a Forbes Technology Council Member and was awarded the 2023 EduFuturist of the year. Al also mentors technology start-ups entering the education sector.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk>

**Steve Purdham**  
**Cheshire & Warrington**

**Enterprise**  
**Cheshire + Warrington**



Steve brings decades of experience and proven success as an entrepreneur and business leader. A graduate in Computer Science from Teesside University, Steve launched his career in technology and in the late 90s was part of the founding team which created SurfControl Plc, a trailblazing cybersecurity firm. Steve's entrepreneurial journey continued with a strong focus on the intersection of music and technology. He co-invested and led the innovative music streaming service

WE7 alongside legendary musician Peter Gabriel which reached over 3m UK users in its first 9 months before selling the company to Tesco in 2012. His track record as a serial entrepreneur demonstrates a rare ability to navigate disruptive industries and deliver transformative business results.

Currently serving as Chair of Westfield Health, a century-old insurance mutual, Steve has overseen significant growth during his tenure. Westfield Health doesn't have shareholders so each year significant contributions are made to make a difference to people's lives, especially around health and inequalities in health.

Recognised with numerous awards, including IOD Cheshire Director of the Year, IOD NW Director of the Year and CEO of the Year, Steve was also honoured with an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Teesside University.

[www.cheshireandwarrington.com](http://www.cheshireandwarrington.com)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**



**David Beeby DL**  
**Cumbria**



As an influential figure in the Cumbrian business community for more than 30 years, David has grown to know the county very well. He moved to Cumbria from Nottinghamshire in 1987 to become Managing Director of Smith Brothers (Whitehaven) Ltd, now Amcor Flexibles. His role developed from managing the Whitehaven company to business development across Europe and then becoming part of its global management team.

In 2004 he left to join Innovia, in Wigton, as its Chief Executive, only stepping back from his full-time role at 2015. David has been Chair of Cumbria Community Foundation, Cumbria CBI and Cumbria Prince's Trust and a member of the management committee at Calvert Trust. He was High Sheriff of Cumbria in 2021 and was appointed the inaugural Chair of Enterprising Cumbria earlier this year. David looks forward to playing his part in helping to drive forward Cumbria's economic performance.

[www.cumberland.gov.uk](http://www.cumberland.gov.uk)

**David Williams MBE DL**  
**East Midlands Combined**  
**County Authority**



David is Chairman of Geldards LLP, a law firm with around 300 staff and offices in Derby, Nottingham, Cardiff and London.

Originally qualifying as a lawyer, David also had careers as a property developer and as General Manager of a major building society.

After heading the property team at Geldards for many years, David has recently taken up responsibility for the private client team.

In addition to these roles, David holds a number of non-executive and trustee positions, including Chairman of EMB Group Limited, Deputy Chair of D2N2 LEP, Board member at Nottingham Trent University and a non-executive Director of East Midlands Chamber of Commerce.

[www.eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Lou Cordwell OBE**  
**Greater Manchester Combined**  
**Authority**



Lou began her career working for WPP before founding Manchester-based digital design studio, magneticNorth (mN). In 2021, mN merged with Fluxx, creating the UK's leading design and innovation consultancy, Magnetic, where Lou was Chief Creative Officer until 2023 when the company was acquired by Newton Europe.

Lou spent 2 years as Director of ID Manchester / Sister, where she led the project's foundational phase including delivery of the Strategic Masterplan and new brand identity. In January 2024 Lou joined the University of Manchester as a Professor of Innovation and Special Advisor to the President and Vice-Chancellor and co-authored the University's Regional Innovation Review. This resulted in the launch of the University's new innovation unit, Unit M and Lou stepped into the role of Unit M CEO at the end of 2024 to lead the team and its mission to help drive innovation-led growth for the region and the UK.

Lou also acts as an advisor to a number of other place-based innovation projects and tech start-up / scale-up companies across the UK. Alongside the day jobs, she is Chair of Greater Manchester's Business Board (LEP) working in collaboration with Greater Manchester's Mayor and Leaders to help drive the region's economy. Lou was awarded an OBE in the 2018 New Year's Honours for services to the creative and digital economy.

[www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](http://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

**Adrian Speller  
Herefordshire**



Adrian is the second-generation Managing Director of Speller Metcalfe, a family-owned regional contractor with a £160m turnover. Having begun his construction career under his father's leadership, Adrian has held roles across the business including Site Labourer, Site Manager, Environmental Manager, and Technical Director. His hands-on experience throughout the construction process has shaped his leadership approach.

A strong advocate for innovation, Adrian has been instrumental in establishing Speller Metcalfe as a leader in low-carbon and sustainable construction, achieving several UK firsts in BIM, Passivhaus, and BREEAM.

Adrian is passionate about driving industry improvement through collaboration and knowledge sharing across the county. Over the past decade, he has led the design and delivery of several landmark capital projects, including the NMITE Skylon Park Campus, the Midlands Centre for Cyber Security, Hereford Hospital Elective Surgical Hub, St Michael's Hospice, and the Master's House in Ledbury.

Having lived in Herefordshire for most of his life, Adrian is committed to fostering an environment where local businesses can thrive. He is focused on attracting new enterprises and skilled workers, identifying barriers to growth, and promoting opportunities. He is also a strong advocate for engaging younger generations to ensure they can contribute to, and benefit from, the county's future prosperity.

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Adrian Hawkins OBE  
Hertfordshire**



Adrian was awarded an OBE for his services to Business by Her Majesty the Queen in the New Year's Honours list in 2021. He is the independent Chairman of the Stevenage Development Board and was appointed to that role in March 2020. A lifelong advocate for Stevenage, Adrian led the Board on a funding bid from the Government's Towns Fund, securing £37.5m - the joint highest contribution received anywhere in the country.

Adrian was appointed to the Hertfordshire LEP Board in 2014 and served as Deputy Chair from 2017 - 2020, completing a full six-year term. Adrian continues to Chair the LEP's Skills and Employment Board, has championed the delivery of the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP) and, in collaboration with the University of Hertfordshire, delivered a voluntary network to provide support to businesses during the COVID pandemic.

Adrian is the Chairman and Founder of biz4Biz, an organisation established to support business owners and leaders, as well as a past patron of business clubs, working alongside Hertfordshire MPs and Local Authorities and engaging with local business leaders. Biz4Biz also delivers the Hertfordshire Business Awards. In 1981, Adrian founded Weldability Sif, which he grew from supplying one branded product in the UK, to many thousands internationally today. In March 2019 Weldability-Sif was acquired by Indutrade AB, a NASDAQ-listed corporation.

[www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk](http://www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk)

**Jason Speedy**  
**Hull & East Yorkshire**



Jason has undertaken a wide range of operational and strategic roles in both manufacturing and service sectors across his career, with Siemens and more recently Groupe Atlantic. Jason spent over 20 years with Siemens working in several business sectors, latterly he was responsible for establishing and leading the offshore wind blade manufacturing site in Hull.

He moved to his current role in 2019 as Chief Operations Officer at Groupe Atlantic UK, ROI & North America, more commonly known for their Ideal Heating brand. Jason is a legal Director and has responsibility for all Operational functions including sites at Hull, Blackpool and Leeds. Jason also leads the External Affairs activity, working collaboratively with Westminster and local Government.

Jason has been a resident in East Yorkshire for almost a decade following his relocation from the Northwest to run the Siemens offshore wind factory in 2015. Having put down his roots, he is a passionate advocate for the Hull and East Yorkshire region. He also champions UK manufacturing, Net Zero and the engineering skills agenda.

In addition to his new role as Chair of the HEY Business Board, he sits as a Director and Governor for the Ron Dearing University Technical College in Hull. He also sits on several business committees within the region including the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce Council and Yorkshire & Humber Made Smarter Board.

[www.heybusinessgrowthskillshub.com](http://www.heybusinessgrowthskillshub.com)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Andy Reed OBE**  
**Leicester & Leicestershire**



Andy is the Director of SajelImpact, an organisation which offers a wide variety of bespoke support and advice to Sports Bodies, NGBs, Social Enterprises and Faith Charities, making sure their strategies and communications are effective with the key stakeholders in their sector and bringing social transformation projects to life. He was Labour & Co-operative MP for Loughborough between 1997 and 2010.

Andy serves on a number of Sport Bodies, Christian organisations and local charities as a volunteer. In June 2012, Andy was awarded an OBE in the Queens Honours List for contribution to sport and the Community and in 2014, he was appointed a Professor of Sport Policy & Development at Liverpool John Moores University.

[www.llbsp.org.uk](http://www.llbsp.org.uk)

## Professor Neal Juster Lincolnshire



Neal took over as Vice Chancellor of the University of Lincoln in October 2021. He holds a BSc degree in Mechanical Engineering and a PhD in Computer-Aided Design, both from the University of Leeds. He has an extensive experience in university management and has worked as the Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Glasgow and Dean of Faculty of Engineering at the University of Strathclyde.

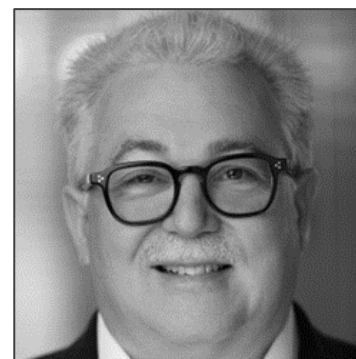
Neal is a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) and past Chair of the IMechE Academic Standards Committee, the committee responsible for accrediting relevant undergraduate degree programmes. He is currently a member of the QAA Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers.

Neal is a trustee of the Lincoln City Foundation and Active Lincolnshire and Chairs the Members of the University of Lincoln Academy trust (a seven-school trust in South Lincolnshire). He is a Director of Humber Freeport Company Limited, Universities and Colleges Employer Association (UCEA), and Lincoln Science and Innovation Park..

[www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk](http://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk)

## Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025

## David Meyerowitz Liverpool City Region MCA



David is Chair of the Business and Enterprise Board and brings 40 years' of experience of the consumer durables market to the role.

David has led large businesses as the CEO or Managing Director for the last 20 years. He is the former CEO of Haier Europe for UK and Ireland, a subsidiary of Haier Smart Home – a leading global household appliance manufacturer, which owns household brands such as Hoover, Candy, Haier, GE Appliances,

Fisher & Paykel, and Baumatic.

David has a passion for sustainable business growth and profit turnaround. He specialises in building and developing leadership teams and as a recognised T-shaped CEO has a broad experience at board level of all business functions, with a deep understanding of commercial disciplines. David was awarded a Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Marketing in 2002.

In his current portfolio, David is supporting a number of companies and organisations as Chair, Board Advisor and Non-Executive Director.

[www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk](http://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk)

**Nick Steven-Jones**  
**Norfolk**



Nick is Chair of the Norfolk Business Board and Chief Executive Officer of Jarrold. Appointed as Chief Executive on 1 February 2023, he originally joined Jarrold as Chief Operating Officer in 2022. He is passionate about the symbiotic relationship between the success of the business and the success of the county.

Nick is also a non-executive director of both Dialogue Content Marketing and Lowestoft Town Football Club.

Starting his career at Aviva, Nick trained as an accountant on the graduate scheme. He held a number of positions across finance at Aviva. These included roles within tax, investments, financial accounting, and finally as Head of Financial Planning and Analysis.

Before moving to Jarrold, he was Chief Financial Officer and Group Financial Controller for Archant.

[www.norfolkbusinessboard.co.uk](http://www.norfolkbusinessboard.co.uk)

## Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025

**New Chair TBA**  
**Oxfordshire**



Awaiting appointment of new Chair.  
[www.oxfordshirelep.com](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com)

**Rachael Randall**  
**Solent**



Rachael is Principal and CEO of HTP Apprenticeship College Ltd which she established in the year 2000.

Prior to that she was involved in Government funded training working for New Deal and a national apprenticeship provider.

Her roots are also firmly based in the world of Hospitality, Tourism and Farming. She also owns a hotel in East Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

[www.solentpartners.com](http://www.solentpartners.com)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Mark Pendlington DL**  
**Suffolk**



Mark has extensive experience of working across the public and private sectors including in industry, national and regional voluntary organisations, further and higher education, economic development bodies and academia, many with UK, EU and international dimensions.

He worked for the Anglian Water Group from 2008-2019 as Group Director responsible for leading the engagement of the business in the important debates around environmental sustainability, regional growth and development, and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Mark was previously a Director at BAA Stansted where he led work on the strategic expansion of the business, including working with business leaders, local authorities, politicians, academics and local communities on the economic, social and environmental consequences of airport growth on the regional and UK economy.

Prior to this Mark was the Chief Executive of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), a national organisation dedicated to the economic health and social wellbeing of the diverse UK rural economy. Mark is currently an Independent Director and Chair Designate at the University of Suffolk, the Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk, Chair of Governors at The Royal Hospital School, Chair of Trustees for the Diocese of Suffolk, Patron of the Green Light Trust, and Trustee of the British Racing School in Newmarket.

[www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk)

**Alison North**  
**Swindon & Wiltshire**



Alison has been an entrepreneur since she was 19 but was in her thirties when she established her information business. Since then she has worked with all sizes and types of business across the world.

She has been present at every twist and turn that the information, now digital data, profession has seen in the last 50 years. For 40 years she has been a business owner, an employer of talented and hard-working people, and an agent for change.

Since selling her business in 2011 she has gone solo and used the freedom that brought to sit on boards as a director, bringing her skills to help businesses to develop and grow. Alison is board director/commercial chair for the Federation of Small Businesses and was Deputy Chair of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

She continues to work in the digital world to help SMEs to transform their business. She is passionate about our talented small and medium sized businesses and believes that if business owners work together on this we will be successful not just locally but across the UK and the rest of the world.

[www.swlep.co.uk/](http://www.swlep.co.uk/)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Siobhan McArdle**  
**Tees Valley Combined Authority**



Siobhan is the Founder of The Strategy House, a strategic planning and turnaround consultancy established in 2020. The Strategy House works in partnership with Corporates, SMEs and Investor backed businesses, both nationally and internationally, developing and delivering high growth, transformation and turnaround recovery plans, and the enabling organisation development and people management programmes.

Siobhan is also Group CEO of L3COS, a global, technology group, seeking to disrupt global supply chains, through the roll out of its proprietary blockchain based operating system, SMART contracting infrastructure, Global Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) payments system and client designed B2B Digital Applications.

Passionate about the Tees Valley, Siobhan grew up in Saltburn, before leaving to go to university, and has returned on more than one occasion to work in Teesside. First as a graduate trainee for Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority, now PD Ports, and more latterly as CEO of South Tees NHS Foundation Trust, delivering a £140 million Financial Recovery Programme over 4 years.

Having previously been a member of the TVCA Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Siobhan has spent the last 12 months working with the Tees Valley Mayor, Local Authority Leaders, and Central Government to reconfigure and replace the LEP, with the newly created Tees Valley Business Board.

[www.teesvalley-ca.gov.uk](http://www.teesvalley-ca.gov.uk)

**Richard Bonner**  
**West of England Combined Authority**



Richard is the UK Operations Director and City Executive Bristol at Arcadis.

A Chartered Civil Engineer, he has a background in design and consultancy working generally in the building sector with both public and private sector clients.

He is responsible for the Operations of Arcadis in the UK, and as the Bristol City Executive for Arcadis leads the business to market shaping propositions to help the city region grow and develop through sustainable urbanisation and creating competitive advantage.

Richard is the President of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative, and a Director of Business West.

Richard is a nominated SME representative on the LEP Board and the LEP Chair.

[www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk](http://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

## Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025

**Jason Longhurst**  
**West Northamptonshire**



Jason is the UK Head of Sustainable Investment & Partnerships at Prologis UK, supporting the company's plans to strengthen its position and commitment to drive sustainable growth opportunities whilst maintaining its leadership as one of the world's most sustainable corporations.

Acting as lead on public, private and trade sector engagement on wide-ranging agenda areas including innovation, market disruption and sustainable economic growth as well as a positively increasing the company's profile as a world leader in industrial & logistics real estate.

Jason is Chair of the UK Business Council for Sustainable Development. He is also a NED advising Clean Growth and Sustainable Development SME innovation companies shaping Net-Zero and Green Economy in the UK. He has held a number of Director/Board positions in both public and private sector organisations including regional development agency, county and unitary bodies, driving growth, investment and sustainable development approaches with industry leaders across multiple sectors.

[www.westnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)

**Mandy Ridyard**  
**West Yorkshire Combined Authority**



With a background in chemistry and manufacturing, Mandy moved to West Yorkshire in 1994. Having worked for CarnaudMetalbox, Mars Inc and Rank Hovis McDougall, she jointly led a buyout of Produmax in 1997.

Produmax is an aerospace engineering firm, and is a global expert in flight assemblies. It exports 70% of turnover worldwide to prestigious clients including Boeing. Her leadership has seen Produmax achieve world class employee engagement, win two prestigious national aerospace awards and the MAKE:UK SME of the year 2021.

Having joined the board of the Leeds City Region LEP in 2019, she now chairs its successor, the West Yorkshire Business Board. She was appointed as Business Advisor to Mayor Tracy Brabin in 2023.

Mandy is passionate about business, innovation, skills, and inclusivity. As Chair of Space Hub Yorkshire, she has led the development of a regional strategy for Space and is now leading its deployment. She is also Chair of the West Yorkshire Innovation Network, was a future ready Skills Commissioner, and is an advocate for our region, innovation, manufacturing, productivity, women in engineering and skills.

[www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk](http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

**Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2025**

**Paul Walker MBE**  
**Worcestershire**



Paul is a Chartered Engineer, with B.Tech and M.Phil degrees in Materials Science from Bradford University. He has held a variety of technical and management roles in the steel industry before establishing his own management consultancy.

In 1993, he joined Malvern Instruments, a company which designs and manufactures scientific instrumentation, where he was Managing Director until he retired in 2017. Paul was awarded an MBE for services to the Industry in 2012.

Paul has held numerous board roles, most notably being Chair of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce for five years, and he is currently a Non-Executive Director of the Malvern Hills Science Park since 1999 and Vice Chair of King's School Worcester.

[www.wlep.co.uk](http://www.wlep.co.uk)

**Jennifer Wood**  
**York North Yorkshire Combined**  
**Authority**



After starting her career in multinational banking, Jennifer launched O&3, a trusted provider of high-quality natural oils for a wide range of applications, from skin care to culinary use.

Jennifer oversaw significant growth at O&3, a company that imports from 40 countries and exports to 62.

O&3 has a strong focus on people as the driver of growth and currently employs 75 people, 50 of whom are based in Ripon.

[www.yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk](http://www.yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk)