BUSINESS BOARD NETWORK



Business Board Chairs

Biographies 2026

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Mark Bretton MBE TD DL FCIEx
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 was an Ambassador for Home Start Herts.

Mark has an MBA in Export Management and International Business from City St George's, University of London, 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

Penny Rinta-Suksi
Berkshire



Penny is Chair of the Berkshire Business Board and a Partner at Blake Morgan, where she leads the firm's Local Government team in England. She has more than 25 years' experience advising private, public and third sector organisations on major projects, commercial contracts and strategic partnerships.

Her work includes complex public-private partnerships, joint ventures, regeneration and infrastructure projects across areas including housing, leisure, energy and education. Penny previously served as a private sector Non-Executive Director (NED) of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), promoting growth, innovation and economic development. As a NED, she chaired the Programme and Enterprise Subgroups.

As a long-term resident of the Thames Valley, Penny has a strong personal and professional commitment to the region. As Chair, she brings together perspectives from across Berkshire's business community to help inform regional decision-making and support investment, skills, employment and sustainable economic growth.

www.berkshireprosperity.co.uk

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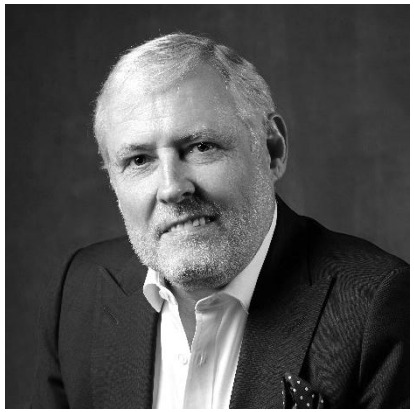
Andrew Smith OBE DL
Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council



Andrew joined the Pinewood Studios Group in June 2008 as Corporate Affairs Director. Synonymous with world class British and international productions, the Pinewood Studios Group is home to some of the most successful feature films and TV shows of all time, including James Bond and Star Wars.

Andrew is a member of BAFTA, the British Film Commission Advisory Board, the British Screen Forum and a Trustee of the British Film Institute. He is also Deputy Chair of Buckinghamshire Council Growth Board, having chaired the Buckinghamshire LEP until its closure in 2024.

In June 2021 Andrew was made a Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire and in January 2022 was awarded an OBE in the Queen's 2022 New Year's Honours for services to 'Business and the British Film Industry'.

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/business/strategic-growth-investment-and-regeneration/

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

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David Beeby DL
Cumbria

ENTERPRISING Cumbria
PROMOTING LOCAL AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH



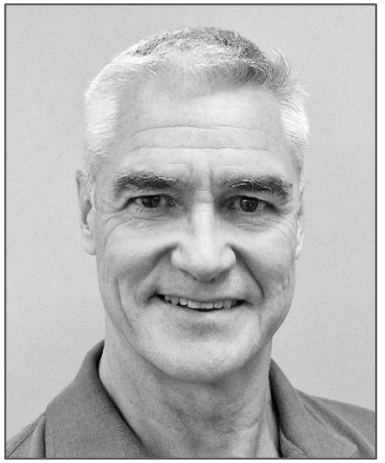
As an influential figure in the Cumbrian business community for more than 30 years, David has grown to know the county very well. He moved to Cumbria from Nottinghamshire in 1987 to become Managing Director of Smith Brothers (Whitehaven) Ltd, now Amcor Flexibles. His role developed from managing the 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

Martin Dudley
Dudley

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council



Martin is Chairman of Thomas Dudley Group Ltd, a fourth-generation family business and one of the West Midlands' longest-established manufacturing companies. With operations spanning engineering, construction products and advanced manufacturing, the Group has built a reputation for innovation, quality and long-term investment.

Martin is a passionate advocate for manufacturing as a catalyst for economic growth, productivity and social mobility. His work focuses on helping businesses create greater value through innovation, skills, technology adoption and collaboration.

As Chair of the Dudley Business Board, Martin represents the interests of the local business community and works with public, private and educational partners to drive investment, support enterprise and develop the skills needed for future economic success. He is particularly interested in strengthening the connection between business strategy, productivity and regional prosperity, and has been a leading voice in discussions around innovation-led growth and industrial development across the West Midlands.

Martin is committed to ensuring that Dudley and the wider region remain attractive places to invest, work and build successful businesses, while creating opportunities for future generations to prosper.

www.dudley.gov.uk/residents

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David Williams MBE DL
East Midlands Combined County Authority



David 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.

David holds a number of non-executive and trustee positions, including being Chairman of EMB Group Limited, a Board member at Nottingham Trent University and a non-executive Director of East Midlands Chamber of Commerce.

www.eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk

Julia Gregory
Greater Essex Business Board



Julia is a distinguished Chair and Non-Executive Director with nearly three decades of expertise in strategic oversight and transformational leadership. She has a proven track record of fostering growth for public sector and FTSE 100 PLC regulated companies. She is nationally recognised as a leader in the real estate development sector, where Julia has over thirty years of experience. She has led the strategic direction of multiple companies and has been involved in delivering nationally significant projects worth up to £7 billion.

Julia has extensive experience working with local and national governments, fostering economic development, and promoting social impact. She holds various leadership roles, including Chairperson at Biozeroc Limited and Home-Start Herts, Senior Independent Director at Corserv Solutions Ltd and Non-Executive Director at This Land Limited, Milton Keynes Development Partnership LLP, Frimley Acute Hospital Trust and Gateway 14 Ltd. Her executive career includes significant roles at Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, Buckinghamshire County Council, Gatwick Airport Limited, and Stansted Airport Limited. Julia co-founded InfraNEDs, an international network inspiring women in the real estate and infrastructure industry to become Non-Executive Directors. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation and was recognised with a lifetime achievement award by the National Businesswomen Awards in 2023.

www.essex.gov.uk/business/greater-essex-business-board

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Adrian Speller
Herefordshire

Herefordshire Council



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

Neil Rutledge (Interim Chair)
Hertfordshire

HERTFORDSHIRE FUTURES



Neil has over 30 years' experience developing public private partnerships (PPPs) to deliver regeneration projects, economic and social infrastructure and renewables assets working with investors, lenders and public sector entities. As a chartered accountant (both ICAEW and CIPFA), he worked for an urban development corporation and subsequently worked for a number of professional firms on PPP projects and is currently a director at Amberside Advisors, a 50-strong financial advisory practice, which was founded in Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire, and which is now part of the global consultancy, Steer Group. He is currently advising on the financing of a range of projects across active sectors such as solar, wind, data centres, energy from waste, district heating as well as financing the upgrading of railway and water infrastructure, working with entities such as National Wealth Fund, and GB Energy.

He has founded a number of businesses, covering fund management, accountancy and energy development as well as Capacity – a not for profit public sector reform agency, based in the North West, trialing new approaches to delivery of services, such as GP provision and children's accommodation. He is also chair of Herts Innovation Quarter, the enterprise zone for Hertfordshire and a Trustee of Victim Support.

www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk

BUSINESS BOARD NETWORK

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Jason Speedy
Hull & East Yorkshire

HEY Business, Growth and Skills Hub



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

Andy Reed OBE
Leicester & Leicestershire

LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESS AND SKILLS PARTNERSHIP



Andy has a professional background in national politics, sports policy, and economic development. He served as the Member of Parliament for Loughborough for thirteen years, during which time he was involved in the Ministerial teams in DCMS, Defra and the Treasury.

After leaving Parliament, he co-founded Saje Impact, a consultancy that works with organisations to develop their social impact and public profile. He also founded the Sports Think Tank, which provides an independent forum for policy debate within the UK sports sector.

His non-executive experience includes board memberships with the Sport and Recreation Alliance, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA), and World Vision UK.

Currently, Andy holds the position of Chair for the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Board, the Sport for Development Coalition and Leicestershire Active Together. His career has consistently focused on the intersection of public policy, sport, and community development.

www.llbsp.org.uk

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Alison Hands
Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority



Alison is Chief Executive Officer of Lincolnshire Co-op. She has over 34 years' experience in a diverse mix of retail environments.

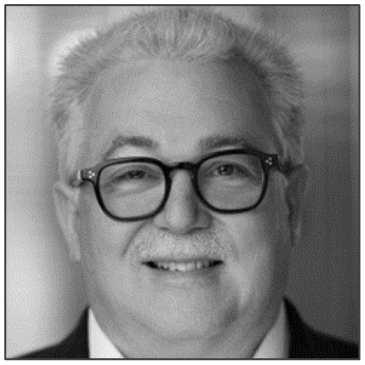
She started her career in store management at Marks and Spencer and spent over 20 years with the company.

Alison has held numerous roles at Boots Opticians, at Walgreens Boots Alliance, and The Body Shop before serving as Managing Director at Wilko. She joined Lincolnshire Co-op in April 2023.

She has also undertaken community roles including as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Nottingham Forest Community Trust.

www.greaterlincolnshire-cca.gov.uk

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

Business Board Chairs – Biographies 2026

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

Alex Reip
Oxfordshire



Alex is a deep tech entrepreneur and exited founder who built and sold Oxford nanoSystems, a clean energy coating company, after thirteen years as its co-founder and CTO, including a period as CEO. He now operates a portfolio of board and advisory roles spanning clean energy, regional economic development, materials, and advises and mentors several start-ups across the UK.

A chemist by training with a PhD in nanomaterials, Alex holds Chartered Chemist and Fellow status with the Royal Society of Chemistry, where he serves as a Trustee and Publishing Board Member. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, and an Honorary Professor at Brunel University London, where he also holds a Royal Society Entrepreneur in Residence appointment.

Alex chairs both Enterprise Oxfordshire and the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Board, and serves as a NED and Audit Committee member at the Net Zero Technology Centre. He is Chair of Governors at North Kidlington Primary School, Chief Strategic Technology Advisor at UCR Group and Ambassador for Corpora.ai.

His awards include the IoD Innovation Director of the Year (Highly Commended), the Enginuity Awards Energy Revolution Innovation Award, and the RSC Rising Star in Industry Award.

www.enterpriseoxfordshire.com

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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.solentgrowthpartnership.co.uk

Jason Longhurst
South Midlands



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.southmidlands.org.uk/business-board

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Lisa Perkins
Suffolk



Lisa has over 25 years of expertise in delivering corporate innovation and cutting edge technologies. She specialises in leading and driving strategies for innovation and transformation.

Lisa was Director of BT's Research and Development Centre at Adastral Park. She was accountable for showcasing and commercialising the world class innovation and research at the Park to drive growth. She led research programmes and the supporting innovation ecosystem of 150+ companies. She managed key partnerships with world leading universities and industry to encourage and develop premier class expertise and to enable new innovation and growth whilst actively promoting and developing an education enrichment programme, working with schools to encourage children and teachers to develop a love of technology, and was instrumental in establishing the DigiTech Centre in collaboration with University of Suffolk and New Anglia LEP at Adastral Park.

Currently, she is Chief Strategy & People Officer at Plexal, an expert innovation company that actively drives positive impact through the establishment and nurturing of ecosystems in key technology domains to solve societal challenges. Responsible for portfolio incubation, regional growth and strategy execution she is driving a critical growth strategy. She is Chair of Suffolk Business Board, Chair of Tech East, Council Member for University East Anglia, trustee for Lapwing Education and visiting Professor at University of Suffolk.

www.suffolk.gov.uk

TBA
Swindon & Wiltshire

Awaiting photo and bio

www.swlep.co.uk/

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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

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