

EAST MIDLANDS SUSTAINABILITY & CSR CONFERENCE 2025

11 September 2025 (09:00 – 13:35)

AGENDA

08:00	Arrival, registration, teas/coffees/cookies, plus networking/exhibitors
09:00 (5mins)	Welcome to the Conference - Dawn Whitmore, President, East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire)
09:05 (10mins)	Welcome from the University of Derby - Professor Christopher Bussell, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean, College of Science and Engineering, University of Derby
09:15 (15mins)	Presenting the findings of Year 10 of the East Midlands Green Growth Trends Report – Dr Polina Baranova, Associate Professor of Strategy and Sustainability, University of Derby
09:30 (15mins)	<p>What Does Effective Governance Look Like and Why is it Important? - Becky Valentine, Co-owner, Sustainability & Building Health Consultant, Spenbeck</p> <p>When we think about being a 'sustainable business' we tend to focus on the operational – how to decarbonise our supply chain, operations and real estate. However, to achieve success it is essential to decarbonise our governance too.</p> <p>Often an afterthought or not considered, this session will help you explore how sustainability and climate change influence your risk register and impact your business continuity.</p>
09:45 (15mins)	<p>Business case study focusing on the importance of Sustainability and CSR to business resilience and growth - James Cunningham, Managing Director, Geo Green Power</p> <p>Understanding how the businesses feel about their current focus on sustainability and CSR - do we feel that other priorities are starting to take the lead.</p> <p>Examples of initiatives that have fundamental organisational benefits, which are much more than carbon accounting and tick box exercises, and can deliver real benefits for teams and customers, which ultimately are reflected in the bottom line. This includes a focus on the specific benefits of solar in terms of CO2, cost saving etc and how to drive the agenda forward through good business governance.</p>
10:00 (15mins)	<p>Beyond buzzwords: Real energy impact for East Midlands businesses & their communities – Jaz Aujla, Strategic Energy Partner, Flogas (part of DCC Energy)</p> <p>With increasing cost pressures, Net Zero overwhelm, and pressure to act quickly with limited internal capability - we will hear about key challenges and solutions faced by businesses in the East Midlands.</p> <p>Sustainability targets and CSR are both long term investments – we will be provided with examples of when they work well and reap rewards for all stakeholders and local communities.</p>
10:15am (30mins)	Break – refreshments and exhibitors



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10:45 (25mins)	<p>Panel Discussion – How do we continue to drive momentum toward net zero?</p> <p>Dr. Polina Baranova, Associate Professor of Strategy and Sustainability, University of Derby – Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becky Valentine – Co-owner, Spenbeck, Sustainability & Building Health Consultant Sally Ann Hurn – Head of Sustainability, Duncan and Toplis James Cunningham - Managing Director, Geo Green Power Jaz Aujla - Strategic Energy Partner, Flogas (part of DCC Energy)
11:10 (10mins)	<p>Time to get to workshops (for more detail please see separate Workshop Document)</p>
11:20 (30mins)	<p>Workshops #1 – Choice of one of four:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is the Sustainability agenda driven by CSR or is it a necessity for survival? – Greg Brown, Strategic Energy Partner, Flogas (part of DCC Energy) – ROOM OL1 Beyond CSR: Building shared value - Better together, strategies for for-profits and non-profits for impact - Dr Elaine Conway, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance, Small Business Engagement Co-ordinator, Loughborough University – ROOM OL2 Integrating sustainability into your organisation and the role of governance – Sally-Anne Hurn, Duncan Toplis – ROOM HEAP Making Carbon Reporting Pay – From carbon reporting to a net zero journey that makes financial sense and competitive advantage – Julie Adams, Network Sales Support Specialist, Auditel (U.K.) Limited – ROOM N112
11:50 (5mins)	<p>5mins to swap over</p>
11:55 (30mins)	<p>Workshops #2 – Choice of one of four:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Solar PV Ambitions: A Reality - Exploring different funding options and how to understand what's right for you - James Cunningham, Managing Director, Geo Green Power – ROOM OL1 Business 4 Nature: making Nature-Based Solutions business mainstream - Nature-based solutions (NBS) is a next frontier of CSR and successful green growth strategies for businesses. This workshop showcases Business4Nature project – a collaborative initiative of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), University of Derby and the Chamber – that supports an uptake of NBSs by the regional businesses. We introduce a typology of business responses to Biodiversity Net Gain and effective pathways for NBSs. Additionally, the workshop maps the next steps in business engagement with the Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Wild Solutions at the DWT - Dr Polina Baranova and Ellie Field, Nature Economy Manager at the DWT – ROOM OL2 The Role of Charitable Foundations in the East Midlands and the 1% Social Impact Fund - Rachael Grime, Chief Executive, Foundation Derbyshire – ROOM HEAP Managing Environmental Risk in the Supply Chain: Business as Usual is not an Option - James Butcher, CEO and Sustainability and Strategic Advisor, Innoscope – ROOM N112
12:25 (5mins)	<p>5 minutes to return to main hall (OL2)</p>

12:30 (15mins)	Corporate social responsibility engagement in the East Midlands - Findings of the most recent research undertaken by East Midlands Chamber, in partnership with the University of Derby and Loughborough University - Dr Elaine Conway, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance, Small Business Engagement Co-ordinator, Loughborough University
12:45 (20mins)	<p>Business Case Study: The Importance of prioritising Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – Taran Rai, Corporate Sustainability Manager, Epson UK</p> <p>Epson prioritises Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), particularly in environmental sustainability and community engagement, aligning its operations with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This commitment is embedded in Epson's mid-to-long-term plans and guides its sustainability actions. Epson's CSR efforts are not just about compliance, but also about leveraging its technological strengths to address global challenges and contribute to a better future</p> <p>Epson is a Japan-led organisation with approximately 80,000 employees worldwide, a broad technology portfolio, and an indirect sales model for its business products.</p> <p>Includes Q&A</p>
13:05 (30mins)	<p>Why Community Support activity is a key strategy for Samworth Brothers - Karen Holdsworth, Community Engagement Lead, Samworth Brothers</p> <p>In conversation with Rick Blackmore, Director of Policy and Insight, East Midlands Chamber</p> <p>Covering Samworth Brothers Group approach to Community Support, citing some project examples and learnings.</p>
13:35	Close for lunch and networking