

Westside Business – a regular newsletter bringing you the latest news, ideas, celebrations and offers from BID members...



City patents firm hails AI surge

Intellectual property and patent experts Marks & Clerk, based on Westside, look well placed to capitalise on the explosion of artificial intelligence (AI).

The company, founded in Birmingham more than 130 years ago on the back of the industrial revolution, has noted a "surge of patent applications" in its third annual report into AI.

And that's good news for a business now employing more than 300 legal experts across seven other UK offices and in Canada, China, Luxembourg, Malaysia and Singapore.

The company, with offices in Alpha Tower, has Esther Gottschalk as the managing partner in Birmingham, from where she is also Head of Trade Marks (Europe).

A spokesperson says: "Practical applications of AI are an increasing focus for industry, demonstrating significant investment that reflects AI's growing impact on the global economy."

"As AI's usefulness increases, companies are eager to protect their innovations. Marks & Clerk is at the forefront of the European Patent Office's engagement with the patent profession to bring legal certainty and consistency to AI applications in a rapidly evolving environment."

[Find out more](#)



City insurers give quarter of a billion pounds to good causes

Insurance company Ecclesiastical, also based in Alpha Tower on Westside, is looking forward to helping give away a total of £250 million across a ten-year period.

Ecclesiastical is now part of The Benefact Group, headquartered in Gloucester and with more than 1,300 employees in total. And the common goal of the charity-owned international financial services specialist is to 'give all available profits to good causes'.

The group has been ranked as a 'top three' corporate giver by the Directory of Social Change 2023/24 Guide to UK Company Giving.

Chief executive Mark Hews said: "Unlike many other businesses, we prefer to measure success not in sales or profits but in the amount we give to communities to help transform lives for the better. Guided by this purpose, we are driven to grow the business, so that we may give even more to good causes."

Meanwhile, anyone taking out a new Ecclesiastical home insurance policy on or before 31 December 2023 will trigger a £130 charitable donation as part of the company's ongoing 130-year anniversary celebrations.

Visit [this page](#) for the 'top three' corporate giver story and [here](#) for the £130 charity opportunity.



Gift card specialist EML Payments makes operational progress

EML Payments, the gift, reward and incentive card specialist with offices in Brindleyplace, has announced progress on its new operational strategies.

Kevin Murphy, interim group chief executive, said: "I am pleased to announce initial progress on our four operational priorities in the few short months since April: talent, remediation, cost optimisation and growth in core business."

The Australian-owned company manages consumer gift cards available at local shopping malls and stores, as well as corporate-funded incentive cards for retail promotions plus corporate-funded employee rewards cards. The growth of such features helps to power more than \$80 billion worth of payments on the company's platform annually.

A spokesperson added: "We create awesome, instant and secure payment solutions that connect our customers to their customers, anytime, anywhere, wherever money is in motion. We're changing the face of payments."

[Find out more](#)



City broadband expands its extra fibre

Glide Group, which has an office in Alpha Tower on Westside, is enhancing its broadband network to support growing demand for increased bandwidth.

The company says an additional move to provide cloud-based telephone calls comes as BT prepares to switch off its older, energy-hungry technology.

Glide is also offering 'dark fibre, dedicated fibre, diverse fibre and scalable fibre' to help organisations like educational institutions to manage their own systems.

The company says it is ranked the country's seventh largest internet service provider with a 2,000km+ dedicated fibre network across 20 different metropolitan areas, serving 400,000 end users.

Lee Jones, network architect at Glide, said: "As technology continues to evolve, it is critical for network architects to ensure that the infrastructure can keep up with the changing demands of today's digital world, [and] do so in a sustainable way by utilising less energy-intensive technology."

[Find out more](#)



Westside law firm seeking a new finance expert

Leading international law firm DAC Beachcroft, with a base in Tricorn House, just a stone's throw from the Five Ways Island, is looking for a new operational finance administrator.

The company, which can trace its roots back more than 250 years to 1762, today has offices in cities from Auckland to Mexico and from Miami to Vancouver, as well as here in Birmingham.

DAC Beachcroft says it offers employees "an open, welcoming culture... and maximum flexibility around when and where you work."

[Find out more](#)



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