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the number

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of our Newsletter.



In this final edition for this year, we share our thoughts about the year: Memories of 2023 written in a style that does not conform to the normal writing that you might expect of a firm of Chartered Accountants.

Some firms buy-in their content, or have it written for them by a marketing department or entirely different organisation. We feel strongly that what we include in our Newsletters, and what is said in our online posts is prepared by the leaders within our firm: its directors and members of the senior team. Leadership set the culture. What we write, must match what we do.

One of those people is Helen Riley, who joined our Corporate Finance Team earlier this year after a career which saw her as a Financial Director of a national company. On page 2 you can read Helen's profile.

In late November we hosted a lovely evening with clients and friends, with a return to the museum in Shrewsbury and we share some photos of the event.

Our usual dates for the diary are included, which just leaves me to wish you an enjoyable Festive break, and an excellent 2024.

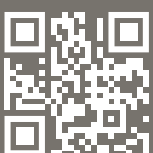
Adrian Barker Managing Director

Inside this edition

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Please note that our office will close for Christmas at 2pm on Friday 22nd December and will reopen on 2nd January 2024

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CBSL website



Meet Helen Riley – Corporate Finance at CBSL Accountants



I think understanding what drives a business is key to its success. I am quite a lateral thinker, so I love looking at a problem and coming up with a potential solution.

I'm new to the team here at CBSL. Adrian and Louise have asked me to put together a little of my background and story so far so that you can get to know me.

I'm settling in and loving getting to know the clients and their teams. I will mainly be working in corporate finance with Adrian but also preparing management accounts and business advice to clients. Having worked with CBSL during the last year as a client I found I was loving the ethos of the company being family focussed, approachable yet professional, and although I'd heard this as a marketing strapline from many other companies over the years, I found it to be a true reflection of the management style at CBSL. I felt that CBSL has a unique offering to its clients in that it offers such a variety of not only accounts and audit, but a wide range of business advisory services usually found in much larger city based firms and I really wanted to be a part of that.

I was born and grew up in Wrexham and I always loved maths and physics in school, leading to the careers teacher to recommend I become an engineer or an accountant. After studying business at GCSE and completing a work experience placement at one of the oldest accountancy practices in the country at the time, I knew it was the latter for me.

After completing my degree in Accounting and Finance and Business Law in 2002 I got a training contract with the firm in Wrexham where I completed my work experience. I completed quarterly management accounts for a national football association and managed their annual audit. I also completed audits on student numbers and ESF projects for a local college.

After qualifying I moved to industry and a national agricultural trailer manufacturer in North Wales as part of a team implementing a new ERP system which was a 2-year project.

I then moved to a national commercial cleaning franchisor as accounts manager moving to the role of Finance Director 2 years later. After 14 years I gained experience of every aspect of the business from cashflow management, IT, HR, contract management and sales. Working in the franchise industry was really interesting as it gave me the opportunity to work with 100 small businesses, part of the franchise network, and we were all striving for the same goal so as well as advising franchisees I learned a lot from them on day-to-day operational aspects of their businesses. I hope to bring those years of business experience to the clients of CBSL.

I think understanding what drives a business is key to its success. I am quite a lateral thinker, so I love looking at a problem and coming up with a potential solution. Being a bit of a spreadsheet geek helps me with this as I love data analysis.

I live in a quiet little hamlet in North Shropshire with my husband Paul and our diva Jack Russell - Treacle. We love being in the outdoors and make regular trips to the Derbyshire and Yorkshire Dales hiking and wild swimming. We have a micro caravan and love exploring new parts of the UK and we are hoping to take a trip on the continent with it and explore some of the gems France and Spain have to offer enjoying great food and laughs along the way.

Well, that's me! I hope I get to meet you all soon. **;**

2023 by Adrian Barker

Asked to write about the year, I didn't know where to begin: 'January you fool!' you might be thinking.

But that would merely lead to a timeline of things that have happened during 2023 and who might want to read my retelling of the year: newspapers will have their journalists who will write their reviews in the Christmas/New Year period, far better than can I.

I lay in bed last night thinking about this, and my mind wondered, led partly by news of a very poorly client, whose husband I will speak to later this Saturday morning. For me and mine it has been a sad year. Too many losses & bad diagnoses. Accidents and injuries.

"Sometimes our final days may be a test. But remember me when I was at my best". 200 faces looked towards the words. I recall her with fondness and love: my only regret that I never met her sooner.

Other images came to mind: a crew neck jumper of a certain colour, who always thought of others. A blue raincoat worn inside as well as outdoors and regardless of weather. New faces joining our team and those of others returning.

As memories flickered in and out of view, loved faces appeared: that of the person who showed me what love really is. Excitement of the plans of someone contemplating a year abroad. New careers started. Caught out for 49 but a life being lived at its best. A strong man. Cuddles with 'Papa'.

Throughout all of the good and bad, love, kindness and caring have been the abiding memories for me. That same reading that I referenced earlier concluded "I've lived a life filled with joy and fun. Live on now, make me proud of what you'll become."

If we choose to apply that, then thinking about what we and our businesses become in 2024 and beyond, therefore is more important than what has happened in 2023. And what a start point we have to work from! Politically; Economically; and, Geopolitically.

Politically decisions seem to be made for short term reasons or personal self-interest. Short-termist culture solutions to transform the transport infrastructure and the NHS will not be found.

Economically, we have in the last 12-months experienced the highest levels of inflation in a generation. The tax burden is the highest ever, and even if increased there will never be enough to afford the NHS in its current form of free at the point of use to all.

All of this with a geopolitical backdrop of military aggression in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. But we should remember our own interference is often the cause of tension rather: as regards the Middle East think of Sykes & Picot, applying their pens and rulers to maps.

Perhaps all we can do here is seek to understand.

And we must make sure that we are prepared for financial shocks: the US have a deficit of £1.7tn to make good at the same time as supporting Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan, and dealing with their own domestic matters.

At the time of writing, The US has sent an Ohio-class vessel to join two US navy aircraft carriers as deterrent. It has 154 Tomahawk missiles which are apparently \$1m each. I don't know the running costs of a US marine, but 2,400 on ships accompanying USS Gerald Ford, won't come cheap either.

How sustainable is all of that?

Perhaps then we should look to security and safety, but that is not always an option. Take investments: gold is often seen as a safe haven. That though rather depends on your perspective. If you have a portfolio with cash and profits in shares, then that might be an option.

Could be worse though – you could be one of the 10,300 chaps who every day have to go and dig it up out of 2 billion year old rock, found one and a quarter miles beneath the surface. 40% of the world's gold has come from the Kloof mine in South Africa. AA Gill described 'ground falls' – "the mine's ceiling hitting you on the head, crushing your organs, snapping your spine, and mushing your pelvis to dog food. Occasionally they just get hit by a train".

Sometimes then, what we do for ourselves and our families is most important, and something that I will reflect upon at the turn of the year. The events of 2023 make me want to prioritise health and happiness. Without those, not a lot really matters.

Whatever your focus is to be, on behalf of all of us at CBSL Accountants, we wish you a successful 2024.

Another Night at the Museum

Thanks to everyone who attended our annual drinks event on Thursday 23rd November 2023 at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery. **We had a great turnout as always – look forward to seeing you at the next one!**



Carol Johnson & Adrian Barker



Rob Johnson & Julian Liddiatt



Paul McLoughlin, Fiona McLoughlin
& Jon Edwards



James Evans, John Edwards,
Sonia Edwards & James Edwards



Gemma Thornell, Luke Taylor,
Jenny Beaumont & Rachel Davenport



Nick Jones & Louise Osselton



Rosie Morgan, Aran Bhullar
& Clare Heighway-Jones



Alison Kidson, Charles Kidson
& Emma Burke



Oscar Haynes, Charlotte Rumble,
Mike Williams & Rhianna Holland

Updates and Reminders

Corporation Tax

1st January 2024 – deadline for corporation tax payment if you have a March year end

Personal Tax

31st January 2024 – deadline for filing online self-assessment returns and making balancing payment for 22/23 and first payment on account for 23/24

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Look out for our latest **updates for business** on our regular emails and blog posts. If you haven't already signed up for them please let us know and we'll make sure you get them.

Christmas closing

We are closed for Christmas from 2pm on Friday 22nd December and will reopen on 2nd January 2024