

# TELEGRAPH

## Insuring nature's legacy

Protecting nature and managing risks with Suffolk Wildlife Trust

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- Awards success
- Lessons from recent cyber attacks
- Blakely: Local roots to worldwide reach
- Managing risk with AGI Glassplant UK



# WELCOME

## A word from the Chairman.

I'm delighted to be able to let you all have a read of our latest edition of *Telegraph*. In it, you'll find some useful information, news of acquisitions, and office relocations (and there's plenty more to come!). These strategic decisions are not just about expansion; they're about ensuring we remain agile, responsive, and ready to meet the evolving needs of our clients.

You'll read how we've helped businesses like Blakely and AGI Glassplant UK navigate the complexities of rapid growth, cyber threats, and operational risk. Their stories highlight the importance of having a trusted partner who understands that insurance is more than a policy; it's a foundation for resilience. Whether it's protecting intellectual property, managing supply chain risk, or ensuring business continuity, our role is to help you plan for the unexpected while building for the long term.

We also shine a light on the work of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, whose mission to protect nature's legacy mirrors our own commitment to protecting what matters most.

Their story is a powerful reminder that legacy is not just about what we leave behind; it's about the actions we take today to shape a better tomorrow.

As the insurance landscape continues to evolve, with rising cyber threats, regulatory shifts, and an increasing emphasis on sustainability, we remain focused on innovation, service, and integrity. Our Feefo *Platinum Trusted Service* award and recognition as winners of *Insurance Broker of the Year* are a testament to our team's dedication to excellence.

We remain committed to partnering with our clients to provide the right advice and the right protection.

Thank you for trusting us to be that partner.



Alan Boswell,  
Executive Chairman

Pictured: the view from our new Ipswich office at Suffolk Yacht Harbour.

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## ANDREW THOMPSON & ASSOCIATES JOINS THE GROUP

We're pleased to announce that Andrew Thompson & Associates (AT&A), an Ipswich-based commercial insurance broker, established in 2010, has joined the Group. This follows the Group's purchase of two Norfolk-based brokers, Priory Insurance Brokers and The Insurance Centre, last year.

AT&A's staff and premises will be retained, while their clients will benefit from the additional support and services of the Group. This acquisition, alongside our office in Bury St Edmunds, bolsters the Group's presence in Suffolk.



*"We're pleased to welcome AT&A to the Group and look forward to working with the team. AT&A shares our values and commitment to delivering exceptional service to clients, and we're confident that Andrew and the team will be a fantastic addition to the Group."*

Alan Boswell,  
Executive Chairman



*"We're excited to join Alan Boswell Group and remain committed to providing the same care and service our clients are familiar with. Being part of a larger brokerage means we will benefit from an increased presence in the market and additional resources and expertise, enhancing the service we deliver."*

Andrew Thompson,  
Founder of AT&A

## NEW OFFICE AT CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS PARK

After nearly 40 years at its current location, our Cambridge office has relocated to a new state-of-the-art office at Cambridge Business Park.

Located in Cambridge's business hub, the move ensures our team are well-placed to serve the wider Cambridge business community. The new location will also provide easy access to the adjacent Cambridge Science Park, a key consideration for our advisers who are specialists in insurance for start-ups and established firms in the science and tech space.

Clients can expect the same personalised service and advice they have become accustomed to and we can be contacted on the same phone numbers and email addresses.



*"We're excited about our move to the Business Park. The new environment, facilities, and transport connections support our ongoing expansion, improves collaboration across teams, and provides a more flexible workspace. It provides our team with everything needed to improve our offering to clients and work even closer with the Cambridge business, science, and tech communities."*

Steve Seekings,  
Regional Director

## GOGOSAFARI TRAIL SPONSORSHIP

We're delighted to once again support Break's sculpture trail series, this time as proud sponsors of the GoGoSafari trail, stampeding through Norwich and Norfolk in summer 2025.

This new trail features a safari of animal sculptures, all uniquely designed by talented local artists. We're thrilled to be sponsoring a rhino, named Karkadann, who will be stomping into Norwich alongside gorillas, giraffes, lions, and elephants for ten weeks this summer.

Making a difference in the communities we operate in is hugely important to the Group and this will be the fourth trail we have sponsored. From a dragon in 2015's GoGoDragons, to a mammoth and T-rex in 2022's GoGoDiscover trail, and a giraffe in last year's Cambridge Standing Tall initiative, the trails generate community engagement and funds for Break's work supporting young care leavers. Since the trails started in 2013, they have generated over £1.4m for the charity.



Karkadann - created by  
Anne Schwegmann-Fielding



*"The trails are a brilliant way to support a fantastic cause while also bringing something colourful and creative to our communities. Our sponsored sculptures are proudly displayed at our head office, and they always get people talking."*

Lee Boswell,  
Marketing Director



# SUCCESS FOR OUR LANDLORDS DEPARTMENT

2024 marked another award-winning year for our landlords department. We were proud to be named the *Best Landlord Insurance Provider* at the National Landlord Investment Show Awards - our fifth win in recent years (2018, 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2024). In addition, we received a *Which? Best Buy* for the third year in a row (2023, 2024, and 2025), reinforcing our consistent commitment to delivering market-leading protection for property owners.

With more than 40 years' experience in UK property insurance, we partner with well-known insurers to deliver tailored, market-leading products - many of which are exclusive to us. Our landlord schemes, including five-star rated policies from Aviva, Covea, SAGIC, and NIG, offer reliable protection for landlords' assets and liabilities.



*"These awards reflect the hard work of our team and our focus on delivering outstanding service and expert protection for landlords across the UK."*

Heath Alexander-Bew,  
Director of Property Owners, Landlords, & Lettings

# DR MARIUS BARNARD RECOGNITION AWARD



Our Employee Benefits team have recently been awarded the prestigious *Dr Marius Barnard Recognition Award*. This accolade was presented in recognition of the team's commitment to making protection policies a cornerstone of our client offering, ensuring clients are well-supported in meeting their protection needs.

Dee Myhill represented the Group at the Scottish Widows event in London, where she accepted the award.

The award ceremony highlighted firms and individuals who ensure protection remains integral to their proposition. The award is named after Dr Marius Barnard, who pioneered the concept of critical illness insurance. His vision led to the introduction of the first critical illness policy on 6th August 1983, designed to provide financial support to patients diagnosed with severe illnesses.

# INSURANCE BROKER OF THE YEAR AWARD

We're delighted to announce we have been named *Insurance Broker of the Year* at the prestigious British Insurance Awards 2025, held on the 9th of July at the Royal Albert Hall.

The award, sponsored by Aviva, recognises outstanding customer service, client retention, and excellence across the UK insurance industry. Alan Boswell Group stood out against the other finalists for our customer-first approach, continued investment in our people and communities, and commitment to providing friendly, expert advice.

Highlights from the past year include:

- Growth in team size and our apprenticeship scheme continues to nurture new talent into the industry.

- An increase in our Feefo customer service score from 4.8 to 4.9.
- Sector-specific awards success, including a *Which? Best Buy*.
- Improving client journeys through digital solutions, while prioritising human-first interaction.
- Recognition for industry expertise, with research featured by major outlets including the BBC and The Times.
- Strategic acquisitions of Priory Insurance, The Insurance Centre, and AT&A Insurance Brokers.
- Ongoing investment in the wider community through sponsorship of local sports teams and donations via The Alan Boswell Group Charitable Trust.



*"We're proud to be recognised as Insurance Broker of the Year. This award is a testament to the hard work and professionalism of everyone across our Group and reflects our continued commitment to putting clients at the centre of everything we do."*

Alan Boswell,  
Executive Chairman

# FEEFO PLATINUM TRUSTED SERVICE AWARD



We're pleased to announce we have been awarded Feefo's highest rating, *Platinum Trusted Service*, for the seventh year in a row.

Since 2015 we have received over 11,000 reviews, and in 2024 alone received 1,414 reviews, and a;

- Customer service score of 4.9/5
- Product score of 4.8/5

Reading honest feedback from real customers not only helps consumers to make informed buying decisions, but it also helps us improve. Feefo provides valuable insights that enable us to continuously improve - negative reviews highlight areas where we can do better, while positive comments are shared with the team or individual mentioned, reinforcing the great work they're doing.



# THE ALAN BOSWELL GROUP CHARITABLE TRUST UPDATE

The Trust continues to deliver on its commitment to make a difference to charitable causes in the areas that we operate in.

In the last quarter, the Trust reviewed 83 applications and awarded over £121,645 in grants, taking the total awarded since 2019 to £3m.

Some of the donations awarded include:

## Suffolk Oxygen Therapy Centre

Suffolk Oxygen Therapy Centre provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy, helping to support the body's natural healing process with conditions such as MS, cancer, long COVID and sports injuries. £10,000 was donated to enable them to purchase their own on-site oxygen generation unit.

## Norfolk Snowsports Club

£5,000 was donated towards new specialist equipment to be used by visitors and at competitions.

## Mike Thurston Water Activities Centre

Mike Thurston Water Activities Centre received a £10,000 donation to help upgrade their showers and changing rooms to a fully-accessible standard.

## Little Lifts

Little Lifts provide free gift boxes to people currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Our donation of £5,015 will fund 115 boxes for patients at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

## Partnership for Children

Partnership for Children provide specialist training to teachers working in SEND schools. A £4,648 grant will be used to support the training of teachers working in schools across Lincolnshire.

## Age Concern North Norfolk

£5,000 was donated to help fund their lunch club, providing a vital lifeline for those in need and in isolation.

## The Matthew Project

£15,000 was donated to The Matthew Project to support their Next Steps programme, supporting vulnerable individuals impacted by substance abuse and poor mental health by providing members with practical and emotional tools to sustain recovery.

## Cleethorpes Wildlife Rescue

£4,032 was donated to fund the purchase of veterinary grade POLTEC enclosures to improve their capacity and facilities for wildlife casualties.



Pictured (L-R): Alastair Drew, Sarah Lusher, Alex Bartram, Abbie Hammond.



## MANAGING RISK FROM LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

The use of lithium-ion batteries is on the rise and the risks are growing – in the UK, fires related to lithium-ion batteries have quadrupled since 2020, killing eight people and injuring a further 190. As we become more reliant on lithium-ion powered devices, and as more of us switch to electric vehicles, business owners need to be aware of the risks these batteries can pose.

### How common are lithium battery fires?

According to the British Safety Council, there were 338 fires involving li-ion batteries in e-bikes and e-scooters in 2023. Lithium-ion batteries in domestic and business waste result in around 201 fires annually. These figures are increasing – one study suggests that 78 million li-ion batteries could be discarded worldwide every day in 2025.

### How can businesses manage the risk?

- Update your risk assessment. A competent person needs to assess the risks associated with handling, storing, using, and charging the batteries. Any assessment must comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Buy items from reputable suppliers and use the correct charger.
- Store batteries carefully. If batteries are not in use, store them away from heat and moisture,

ideally in metal containers or fireproof bags. Keep li-ion batteries away from any flammable items.

- Don't charge batteries in unoccupied areas, overnight, or unattended.
- Check regularly for damage or defects.
- Keep electric vehicles away from combustible materials and buildings and install automatic fire detection systems. If you have charging points (or plan to install them), your insurer will likely have requirements for where these should be located.
- Do not use electric vehicles that have been damaged.
- Ensure the fire service knows about your charging arrangements and ask them for advice on training staff to deal with lithium-ion battery fires.

Lithium-ion batteries are indispensable to modern daily life, and their use is rising. As more of us switch to electric vehicles, fires and explosions will become more common. As a result, businesses need to carefully consider and plan for the risks associated with lithium-ion batteries.

To discuss the risks and insurance considerations of li-ion batteries and your business, speak to our team.



# INSURING NATURE'S LEGACY

Protecting nature and managing risks  
with Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been protecting and conserving nature in Suffolk since 1961. Part of a Federation of Wildlife Trusts which began over 100 years ago, Suffolk Wildlife Trust cares for nearly 8,000 acres of land, including 50 nature reserves, across the county. Originally started as a grassroots movement to protect a piece of land that became Redgrave and Lopham Fen nature reserve, the Trust was born out of a desire to protect nature across the county, contributing to the preservation of land to maintain and restore wildlife habitats.

As with many charitable Trusts, they are powered by their team of employees, an army of volunteers, and the vital support of their members. We spoke with Michael Strand, Community Fundraising Manager, and Andy Wright, Facilities Manager, on the work they're doing to protect nature, the challenges they face, and how Alan Boswell Group helps to protect the Trust.

"The Trust was a voluntary organisation to begin with. But that initial core group of people soon realised how many others wanted to support their campaign.

And so, lots of little pockets of volunteer groups started to spring up all over the county prepared to take action for wildlife in their local area. Those individual groups then became a network, growing into the registered charity it is now." Michael notes on the origination of the charity.

Over the last 60 years, the Trust has evolved to concentrate its efforts around five key areas; as Michael explains, "We currently manage 50 nature reserves where, depending on the time of year, staff can be going out doing survey work, monitoring, hydrological work, practical conservation management, as well as interventions for rare species.

"As Suffolk's nature charity, we've got an unrivalled learning and education programme. We set the trend for that across the movement back in the early 1980s, and we continue to shift the emphasis of our work from environmental education deliverers, to enabling people and communities to engage with wildlife in a way that is convenient to them.



"Our Wilder Landscapes Programme is a new area of opportunity where we strategically work with groups of farmers and landowners, including two DEFRA funded Landscape Recovery Schemes covering in excess of 100,000 acres. We help advise, support, and guide landowners to look at ways in which they can adapt their practices to draw upon soon-to-come-onstream grant and funding pots that benefit

and support, nature can recover, providing wider ecosystem services such as flood alleviation and pollution reduction. Suffolk Wildlife Trust plays a pivotal role in helping to restore nature and wildlife across the county. Its vision for the decade up to 2030 is to secure 30% of land for the recovery of nature, along with motivating one in four people to take regular meaningful action for the benefit of nature.

for developments to achieve at 10%. To help protect and restore nature across our county, we believe all developments should be achieving at least 20% BNG.

"A large part of what we do is to provide advice. Our consultancy arm, Wilder Ecology, provides monitoring, surveying, and on-site work, and also brings in much needed funds for the charity", explains Michael.

Andy explains some of the changes the Trust is making, "Carbon reduction is something that falls in my job description and we're working hard on it. We've just purchased a fleet of electric vans and cars, and we're putting in a lot of infrastructure for that, including chargers and solar energy. It's a long journey, but we're getting there!"

Alongside the income from the consultancy, the Trust relies on core funds generated from its members to be able to provide the outdoor spaces we all enjoy and make some of the larger investments required, such as species recovery projects and large land purchases.

Michael: "What sets us apart is that we believe access to wildlife is a fundamental birthright in this country. Because we want wildlife to be available to everybody, our nature reserves remain free to visit. We are hugely grateful to our members for making this possible; we would like more people to



wildlife while maintaining viable farming businesses."

Currently, we face an ecological and climate crisis and nature is in decline. If this continues, it will have a catastrophic impact on

"These targets are based on scientific modelling, which details that 30% of land in recovery for nature is an ecological tipping point, at which juncture nature has a greater chance to be self-sustaining.

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wildlife and humans, with extreme weather conditions becoming more common, flooding increasing, sea levels rising, and ecosystems collapsing. Yet this decline is not inevitable. When given space, time,

"Biodiversity Net Gain [BNG] is a new planning requirement. From February 2024, BNG became mandatory for most developments in England and the UK Government has set the minimum level of BNG

join us however they can, as we urgently need more of us to do more to bring back wildlife.

"Alongside our membership, we're also supported by our donor

programme, legacy givers, and grant giving bodies. Combined, they are a collective force for

Account Director], Alison [Sage, Commercial Account Handler] and, more recently, Rebecca [Dingle,

us and she's always available throughout for any guidance we need. Recently, as the size of our

*"Alan Boswell Group does such a good job supporting us. We have a diverse portfolio, so it's not easy to manage, but the support we receive from Carly, Alison and, more recently, Rebecca on the risk management side, gives us that additional guidance when we need it. They're all amazing!"*

good and have enabled many of these land purchases that result in new green spaces for people and wildlife."

Guaranteeing the Trust's income requires continued commitment. This would be a much harder task without the support of its team of volunteers. However, funding is only one of the risks the Trust faces.

"Having a lot of diverse sites and activities presents risks. The public and access is probably the main one; many of our nature reserves are wetlands or incorporate water bodies, but we have to manage that risk effectively while giving people a positive nature experience. We also have the property and infrastructure element, as well as our fleet vehicles, and lots of staff."

Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been a client of Alan Boswell Group for over 15 years, providing them with insurance protection, risk management support, and employee benefits services.

Andy explains a bit more about how that works, "Alan Boswell Group does such a good job supporting us. We have a diverse portfolio and the support we receive from Carly [Buckingham,

Risk Management Adviser] gives us that additional guidance when we need it. They're all amazing!

"I speak to Carly almost on a weekly basis. Having that same person I can speak to who knows what we do inside and out means we can have frank, sometimes difficult, conversations.

"I think this has been a great turning point for our staff as well over the last few years to help them understand why insurance matters. It's really important to

projects have grown, Rebecca has also been helping us to comply with CDM [the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations]."

So, what's next for the Trust?

Michael: "The landscape recovery work is absolutely key for us moving forward. There are several new funding streams coming along to help landowners and farmers look at how they can diversify or change their practices. For us to advise, support, and consult on



make sure everyone understands what they have to do to remain compliant.

"On the risk management side, Rebecca does a yearly audit for

such work will help the delivery of collaborative, high quality, long-term solutions for nature's recovery from which all of us will benefit."



# CYBER INSURANCE

## Lessons from Marks & Spencer, Co-op, and Harrods.

In the wake of a recent rise in high-profile cyber attacks, the need for cyber insurance has never been more important. Over recent months, major UK retailers including Marks & Spencer, Co-op, and Harrods have all fallen victim to increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks.

### Recent cyber attacks

One of the most highly publicised cases this year was the cyber attack on M&S over the Easter period, which triggered disruption across its operations and continues to do so months later. M&S was forced to suspend its online clothing business and faced significant supply chain disruption to its food stores, which resulted in millions wiped off its market value.

Crucially, the company revealed that the breach, which also involved the theft of customer data, was not the result of technical failure, but human error. This highlights that even the most sophisticated IT and cyber security systems can't fully eliminate risk. People remain the weakest link in cyber resilience, and without a thorough risk management strategy (with a focus on staff training/awareness) and comprehensive cyber insurance, businesses leave themselves exposed.

The financial repercussions of cyber incidents can be severe. M&S has estimated a £300 million hit to profits and ongoing disruption. While M&S were fortunate to have cyber insurance, the company is now working to mitigate the damage through "management of costs, insurance and other trading actions".

M&S is not alone. In the same period, Co-op and Harrods were also targeted by cyber criminals. Acting quickly to lessen the impact of the cyber attack has mitigated the financial repercussions, but reportedly neither firm had cyber insurance in place at the time of the attacks.

All three firms may also be liable for fines for data loss, the cost of litigation and cyber security improvements, the need to reduce future costs to offset the impact on profits and a hit to their bottom line and reputation.



M&S has estimated the cyber attack will equate to a £300 million hit to profits.

While each incident differed in nature, a clear trend is emerging: attackers are becoming more strategic, opportunistic, and sophisticated. The National Cyber Security Centre has warned that it expects the use of AI in cyber attacks to be likely to equate to an increase in frequency and severity of cyber threats over the next two years. It's not just the tech infrastructure at risk, but brand reputation, customer trust, and operational continuity.

### How can cyber insurance help?

As well as covering financial losses, a well-structured cyber insurance policy provides access to expert breach response teams, legal counsel, public relations support, and business continuity planning. These resources can be the difference between a swift recovery and long-term damage.

Considering recent events, some insurance industry analysts expect cyber insurance premiums to rise in 2026 and insurers to impose stricter controls on the insured, as underwriters reassess the frequency and severity of claims. However, at present, cyber insurers are offering lower premiums than in 2024, so now is an ideal opportunity for businesses to review their protection against unwanted cyber attacks.

The lessons from M&S, Co-op, and Harrods are clear; cyber security, risk management, and training are critical in defending against cyber attacks. However, it's equally important to recognise that you cannot totally eliminate the human factor.

This is where cyber insurance steps in to protect the long-term viability of your business, where reputational damage can be significant.

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The UK insurance market is entering a phase of cautious optimism following years of volatility driven by inflation and geopolitical uncertainty. We take a look at what this could mean for you this year.

### Market softening

A prolonged "hard market" has seen rates on some types of insurance double in recent years, particularly in Professional Indemnity and Directors' & Officers' Insurance in response to the Grenfell Tower fire and pandemic lockdowns. Insurer confidence is now returning to certain classes of insurance, and consumers can make savings on Directors' & Officers' Insurance and Professional Indemnity for the design and construction industry.

### Regulations and Consumer Duty

The FCA's Consumer Duty continues to shape industry practices. 'Good outcomes' for our clients have always been central to our approach, so we welcome the increased emphasis within the industry.

### A place for technology

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly used in underwriting, claims processing, and customer service. While some brokers direct customers online, we remain committed to a human-centred approach which provides access to our people.

### Increasing importance of cyber insurance

Cybersecurity threats continue to grow, with statistics showing that 20% of businesses and 14% of charities have been victims of cyber crime in the last year. Despite this, only 7% of businesses have a specific cyber insurance policy. The increasing frequency and sophistication of cyber threats highlights the importance of considering cyber insurance as part of risk management.

### Underinsurance

Underinsurance remains a significant issue, with statistics indicating that 76% of UK properties are underinsured. Inaccurate valuations of property, stock, machinery, and assets can lead to substantial financial shortfalls in the event of a claim.

### Talent acquisition

The insurance industry faces a talent shortage exacerbated by shifts in the operating models of major insurance companies. As these larger insurers streamline operations and adopt more technology-driven strategies, there are fewer new professionals entering the industry through foundational roles. Our apprenticeship scheme, staff training and development, investment in facilities and staff benefits, all help us to stay ahead when it comes to recruitment.



# FROM LOCAL ROOTS TO WORLDWIDE REACH

How Alan Boswell Group supports Blakely's growth from Norfolk to a global lifestyle brand.

While the clothing brand Blakely is now a global name with many famous faces adorning their oversized hoodies and muscle-fitting shirts, their roots remain firmly in Norfolk, where the fashion company was first launched over 12 years ago. Deriving their name from the popular town of Blakeney on the North Norfolk coast, they have become a disrupter in the lifestyle apparel markets with their timeless, super-soft, and long-lasting sports and leisurewear.

Established in 2012 by Gareth Newman while studying pharmaceuticals at the University of East Anglia, Blakely originally emphasised a nautical theme in its designs to reflect their locality. As with many start-ups, Gareth was a jack of all trades: design, branding, logistics, e-commerce, and marketing; he even did all the photography.

We spoke with Andy Gale, Chief Operating Officer (and life-long friend of Gareth), to understand what's driven the brand's rapid rise, their association with Norwich City Football Club, and why they chose Alan Boswell Group for their insurance programme.

"Start-up was slow in the very early days, but the brand gained traction and each delivery started to sell out and, over time, improved significantly," notes Andy. "I joined in 2020 when the business was becoming well established, but Gareth was still doing everything in the business. We established teams and structure so we could really push it on. It's been a roller coaster since then, to be honest, with a fantastic growth trajectory. £8 million back in 2019 and we hope to do £65 million this year. So, in five years, we've seen astronomical growth."

So, what has driven this growth? According to Andy

it's all about content and how Gareth targeted their ideal demographic using social media marketing.

"Gareth's got a keen eye for photography. At the time that Blakely was emerging, e-commerce was very much centred around the use of bland imagery shot on a white background. But e-commerce and Instagram merged as a recognised traffic platform around 2017-18, and that's where our demographic was. So, as opposed to a studio shoot, Gareth used to shoot on location, taking models to Ibiza, Mykonos, and different places where people aspired to be. That's something that we've carried on as a strategy throughout."

While the e-commerce side of the business continued to grow, the brand was eager to create more of a tangible link with its audience. This led to trialling bricks and mortar, with pop-up shops in Norwich city centre and Westfield Stratford City shopping centre.

"We found that we had a great connection with the customer. They wanted to see the people behind the brand and have the experience of being part of Blakely. Off the back of the Westfield and Norwich success, we launched an events team. The idea is to create experiences in the places where our customers are. This is what led us to our first Apex event."

Andy is talking about the 'Blakely Apex Games', a Hyrox-style sports event where teams of athletes compete in a race that combines running with functional workout exercises.

"I saw the buzz that people were getting off Hyrox, so we decided to create a semi-competitive event where more people could aspire to enter. We have now held two Apex events and are committed to doing more.

***"As a business owner, I sleep more securely and soundly at night knowing I am well insured off the back of Jon's advice. So, I absolutely advocate for Alan Boswell's, because in my experience you have been fantastic on all fronts."***

Andy Gale,  
Chief Operating Officer, Blakely





It's about doing something different and giving back to the customer. It's not just about plugging clothes. It's quite a congested market. We want to give people a Blakely experience."

brand to receiving the clothing.

"Everything we need for the business is done in-house, so we can be agile and react to market trends and

*"I think our product is very, very good quality for the price we sell it for; that's one of the fundamentals of our success. It's high quality, attainable pricing. Then, everything else is in customer service; the full experience from when they first engage with the brand to receiving the clothing."*

It is indeed a congested market. *Fortune Business Insights* values the sports apparel market at well over £200 billion. So, how does a brand from North Norfolk take a slice from the behemoths of Nike, Adidas, and Under Armour?

"I think our product is very, very good quality for the price we sell it for; that's one of the fundamentals of our success. It's high quality, attainable pricing. Then, everything else is in customer service; the full experience from when they first engage with the

customer demands very quickly. From a commercial perspective, that does set us apart. It allows us to hit the right places at the right time."

While they push the boundaries on the global market, they are still acutely aware of their Norfolk roots, which led to the business signing a three-year deal to become the Primary Sponsor of Norwich City Football Club at the start of the 2024-25 season.

"We're following some marquee names as club sponsors: Lotus, Colman's, and Aviva.

These are well-known local brands. For us to be recognised in history alongside those brands is quite something. We want to make it work; this is not a vanity project for five minutes, we are embedded with the Club to ultimately benefit our mutual community.

"We think it's one of the first fashion brands to go on the front [of shirts] of a sports team, especially a professional sports team. In terms of straight-out leisure wear, there aren't many."

As anyone in business knows, growth doesn't just lead to rewards; it also brings its fair share of challenges. We asked Andy what risks the company faced as they expanded.

"Supply chain risk is important, especially during a growth period. Our demand has outstripped supply a few times in the last 18 months or so. Ensuring good delivery of products from the supplier to the door is very important.

"And, obviously, being a retail business, a lot of our money is tied up in stock. Our main insurance risk is around our stock and protecting this to ensure we can continue to grow.

"Cyber cover is obviously very critical to us as well. We're wholly online; pretty much entirely for advertising and marketing. Our website is where our income comes through. So, cyber insurance is also a critical component for us.

"In the past 12 months, we've also started having problems with trademarks; people are imitating our products, which is a risk. You have to think on your feet and be relatively combative. We've now got our products trademarked in several countries. We must be doing something right, you know? It must be a good product if they're imitating it."

*"We're following some marquee names as club sponsors: Lotus, Colman's, and Aviva. These are well-known local brands. For us to be recognised in history alongside those brands is quite something."*

With these increasing risks, the business was keen to find an insurance partner who could work with them as they grew. Andy introduced the Blakely team to Alan Boswell Group in 2020. But what convinced them to select the Group over a multi-national broker?

"I think that goes back to the point about being agile; we're a fast-growing business. I've been a client of Boswell's for over ten years, and your ability to react to change and demand is second to none. So, that's why I was keen to integrate Blakely and Alan Boswell Group



when I joined Blakely. Working with local suppliers is important to us. Obviously, they have to be good, though!

"I knew about you as I have life insurance and a pension through Adam [Revell - Senior Financial Planner] and we also brought Jon [Preston - Account Executive] in to help with the insurance for my family business, which was really successful. It is a far more robust service than we've ever had before.

"It was a good education, for me, in terms of insurance and how we should do it properly instead of just trying to find the cheapest policy out there.

"As a business owner, I sleep more securely and soundly at night knowing I am well insured off the back of Jon's advice. So, I absolutely advocate for Alan Boswell's, because in my experience you have been fantastic on all fronts."

Blakely's journey from a Norfolk start-up to a global fashion brand is a testament to innovation and maintaining connection with its roots. With

a commitment to quality, experiential customer engagement, and strategic partnerships, the lifestyle brand continues to go from strength to strength. Their partnership with Alan Boswell Group provides the protection and confidence needed to overcome the challenges of rapid growth. With comprehensive insurance and risk management sorted, Blakely can focus on what they do best - creating exceptional apparel dedicated to making their customers feel and look good.



# NATIONAL INSURANCE RISES

## Could you save with salary sacrifice?

As changes to National Insurance (NI) came into effect in April, taking the contribution rate from 13.8% to 15% and reducing the threshold to £5,000, businesses have an opportunity to review their pension schemes and explore the cost-saving possibilities of implementing a salary exchange arrangement.

### What are salary exchange pension schemes?

Salary exchange, also known as salary sacrifice, is an arrangement where employees agree to reduce their gross salary by an agreed percentage, which is then redirected into their pension pot as an employer contribution. With the changes to National Insurance having a financial impact on most businesses, salary exchange pension schemes offer an opportunity to offset the cost of the rise in contributions.

### Benefits for employers:

**NI savings** - the exchanged salary reduces the gross earnings on which employer NICs are calculated, ensuring employers save on NI contributions in comparison to other types of workplace pension schemes.

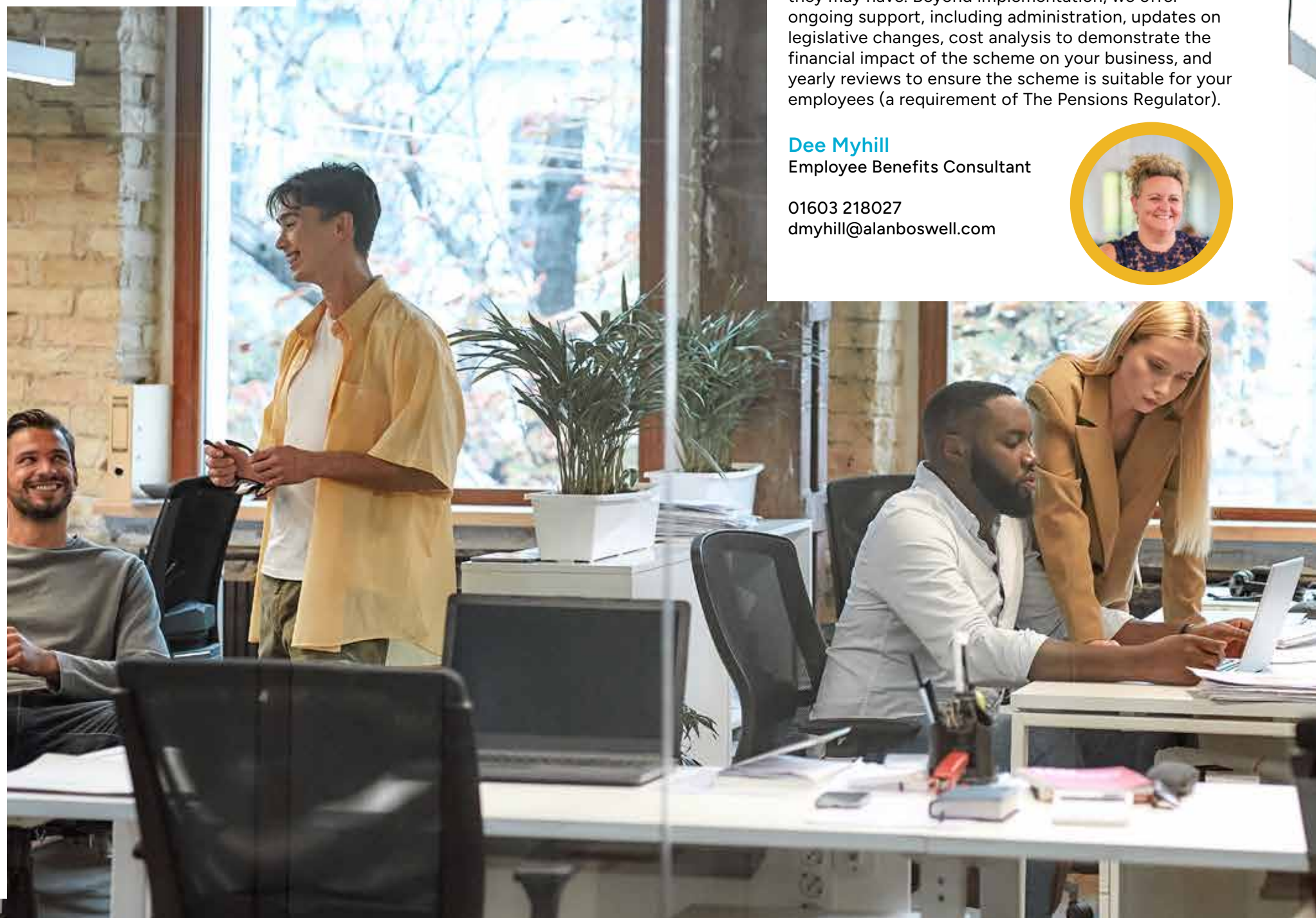
**Attractive employee benefit** - a salary exchange pension scheme is often viewed as an attractive employee benefit, helping you to attract new recruits, retain employees, and enhance employee satisfaction.

**Cost-efficiency** - these savings can reduce overall employment costs.

### Benefits for employees:

**Tax and NI savings** - the portion of salary exchanged is exempt from income tax and employee NI contributions. The NI savings can be redirected to increase either the employees take home pay or contributions to their pension plan.

**Increased retirement savings** - by redirecting pre-tax salary into their pension, employees have the potential to build a larger retirement pot over time, without decreasing their take-home pay.



## How can we help?

At Alan Boswell Employee Benefits, we specialise in helping businesses implement and maintain salary exchange pension schemes.

Our team works with you to explore your current pension arrangements and identify where improvements can be made to benefit both the employer and employee. Alongside advice and consultation, our team can set up and administer the scheme, including communicating the changes to your employees and answering any questions they may have. Beyond implementation, we offer ongoing support, including administration, updates on legislative changes, cost analysis to demonstrate the financial impact of the scheme on your business, and yearly reviews to ensure the scheme is suitable for your employees (a requirement of The Pensions Regulator).

**Dee Myhill**

Employee Benefits Consultant

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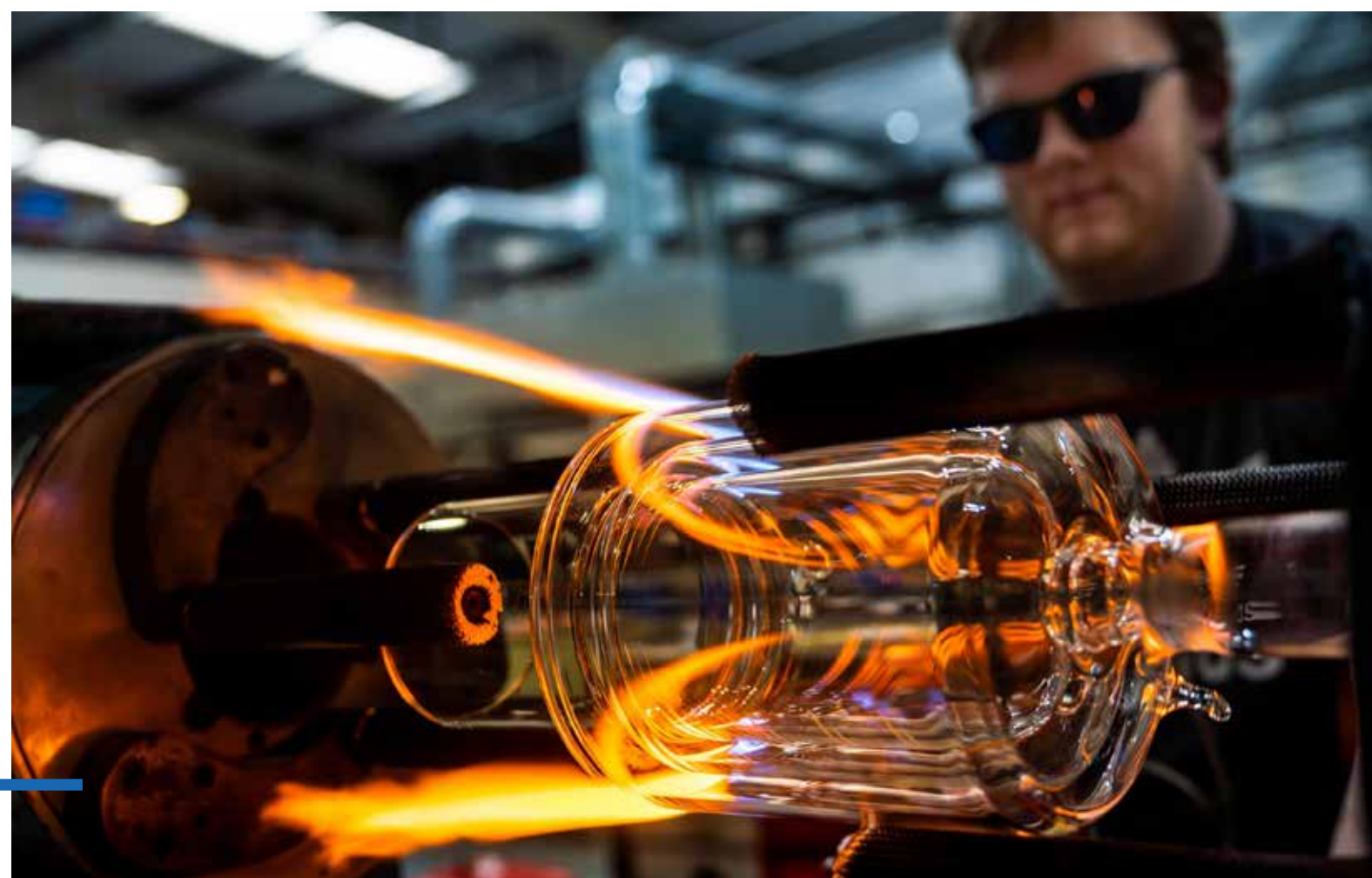




# CRAFTING INNOVATION AND MANAGING RISK AT AGI GLASSPLANT UK

Built on strategic acquisitions, expert craftsmanship, and adaptability to a changing global science and technology landscape, AGI Glassplant UK has firmly established itself in the European market. At the centre of this evolution is Stuart Simcock, Co-Founder and Director of AGI Glassplant UK. His background in scientific glassblowing has helped establish AGI across a diverse range of industries, from pharmaceuticals and chemical manufacturing to architectural design.

AGI Glassplant's roots go back more than 70 years to Japan, where the third-generation family business parent company, Asahi Glassplant Inc., holds an impressive 80% share of the domestic market for scientific glassware. Despite this dominance, AGI's presence outside Japan was sparse. Looking to establish a foothold in the UK, Stuart's approach was led by strategic acquisitions of similar glassblowing businesses. "The decision to expand internationally was driven by the growing globalisation of science," Stuart explains. "Multinational companies expect consistency -



if they have a glass product in Switzerland, for example, they want the same product available in Japan or the US. Asahi Glassplant recognised that they needed to establish a global presence to retain and grow their market share.

"Asahi Glassplant were recruiting skilled labour, so the goal was twofold: to increase our sales and market penetration in Europe and boost production capacity for the Japanese market."

*"Cambridge has always been a centre for scientific glassblowing. Many small glassblowing businesses have been built around the scientific community here."*

That's where Stuart and his co-founder came in, seeing the opportunity to bring AGI's expertise to the European market. In 2019, AGI Glassplant UK was founded, based in Royston, and well-placed to service the booming science industry around Cambridge and Oxford.

"Cambridge has always been a centre for scientific glassblowing. Many small glassblowing businesses have been built around the scientific

community here."

AGI UK employs nine glassblowers - a significant figure considering that there are only an estimated 50 scientific glassblowers across the entire UK. AGI's product range reflects the breadth of its customer base.

"From simple lab glassware to complex chemical processing systems, we serve

industries ranging from academia, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and even architectural design. We work with small laboratories and large manufacturing plants," Stuart says. "For some clients, we're designing completely bespoke systems to help them develop new compounds, where we'll visit their site to understand what they need, design the product, quote, and then go off and make it for them. For others, we're





producing high-volume components integrated into their manufacturing processes.

"We're involved at every stage - from discovery through to manufacturing," Stuart says. "But our sweet spot is in the development phase, helping customers move from small-scale experiments to full-scale production."

Operating a specialised manufacturing business has its own unique set of risks. "We work with hot glass,

chemicals, and highly specialised equipment," Stuart explains. "If a fire were to damage our facility, replacing that equipment could take up to a year. That's a problem if we're only talking about one piece of machinery, if we were to lose the entire plant that would be catastrophic for us. There's no used market for this kind of machinery - we'd have to rebuild from scratch."

To mitigate this risk, AGI has established strict processes and procedures developed through years of experience, and manufacturing facilities in Switzerland, Italy, the US, and Japan that it can call upon if needed.

Cybersecurity is another major concern. "We handle a lot of sensitive technical data," Stuart notes. "Losing that data - or having it stolen - could be catastrophic both in terms of production but also reputationally. But we have well-tested security processes, and our employees regularly undergo cyber training. Alongside this, we have the back up of our insurance if needed."

Stuart recalls, "Our acquisition of another Cambridge-based glassblowing business connected us with Alan Boswell Group through David [Lowe, Account Executive]. The previous

*"David and the team at Alan Boswell Group are knowledgeable, proactive, and genuinely interested in helping us strengthen our business and looking for risks that we haven't covered."*

owners spoke so highly of David that it was impossible not to meet him.

"The difference in service was night and day," Stuart says. "Our previous broker was competent but disconnected - they never visited us on site and didn't really understand our business."

"David and the team at Alan Boswell Group are the opposite - knowledgeable, proactive, and genuinely interested in helping us strengthen our business and looking for risks that we haven't covered."

When AGI UK first partnered with Alan Boswell Group, one of the first things David identified was a gap in Directors' and Officers' (D&O) Insurance. "We had no protection in place, which left us potentially exposed," Stuart says. "David advised us to fix that immediately."

"In terms of providing the right data for renewals, some of the questions from insurers can be difficult to interpret; without your guidance we would've been either under or over covered, leading to immediate costs or losses in the future if we needed to make a claim".

The partnership proved particularly valuable when one of AGI's employees faced a difficult health situation. "The insurer wasn't handling the case well, which put a lot of stress on the employee," Stuart recalls. "Calum [O'Donnell, Chartered Financial Planner] stepped in, acting as a buffer between us and the insurer, and got things back on track."

*"Having someone who knows the system and can apply pressure and leverage made all the difference. Calum was instrumental in doing that for us, so, as things have come up, we've been gradually moving them over [to Alan Boswell Group]."*

Alan Boswell Group have been AGI Glassplant UK's insurance broker since 2021, providing protection for their property, business interruption, liabilities, and marine transport. From our Cambridge office, our

science and tech insurance experts provide support and advice to Stuart and the wider AGI team.

Alongside this, Calum and our employee benefits team have created a package of benefits that support employees and help establish AGI as an attractive employer in a competitive market.

Looking to the future, AGI's long-term strategy remains unchanged. "Asahi Glassplant [the Japanese parent company] has been around

for 70 years and takes a 100-year view on business," Stuart says. "It's about sustainable growth and building lasting relationships with customers."





# HANDLE WITH CARE

## How our claims team makes all the difference when it matters most.

When the worst happens - a fire, a flood, a road accident - your insurance is only as good as the people standing behind it. At Alan Boswell Group, we have a dedicated claims team with more than 30 claims specialists who take ownership of your claim from day one. While many brokers outsource claims or leave you to deal with the insurer directly, we assist clients on every claim.

You'll find our claims handlers across our regional branches in Norwich, Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds, Peterborough, and Ipswich. Our insurance professionals have specialist knowledge across a wide range of sectors and policies including farm, manufacturing, motor trade, and hospitality.

We've built dedicated teams focused on:

- Motor claims, from private vehicles to fleets.
- Commercial and personal lines, including complex liability cases, business interruption, and personal home insurance.
- Rent protection claims for landlords and property owners.

Dealing directly with insurers can be time-consuming, confusing, and frustrating. Long hold times, faceless online chatbots, and slow responses are far too common.

When you make a claim with us:

- We handle the communication with the insurer, where possible.
- We do the chasing, reporting, and progress-tracking.
- You'll never have to wait on hold or explain your story multiple times.

We've worked hard to build and maintain strong escalation channels and high-level contacts with insurers - access that's simply not available to the general public. When issues arise, we know the

right people to speak to and are in your corner to reach a fair settlement.

Every claim is different, and so is every client. That's why we tailor our service to your needs. Whether it's a personal policyholder needing reassurance or a large commercial client with multiple ongoing claims, we adapt to offer the right level of support. For our larger clients, we often assign dedicated claims handlers to ensure continuity and understanding of your business. For everyone else, we ensure that one point of contact manages your claim from start to finish - no passing you from person to person.

If there's ever a dispute or complication, we regularly challenge insurer decisions and negotiate better outcomes on your behalf. We've even helped commercial clients resolve historical claims issues, ensuring a cleaner slate when approaching new insurers and helping them secure better terms.

As part of our Group apprenticeship scheme, we provide hands-on training and career development opportunities. Our apprentices work alongside experienced claims handlers, learning technical knowledge, communication skills, and insurance expertise.



**11,094**  
claims reported  
to ABG in 2024.



*"Your support means a lot to us and speaks of the real value one gets in working with a broker, goodness knows where we would be without your advocacy and support."*

Mr Ainley,  
Home Insurance Client



We all hope that we don't have to make a claim, but when you do, it can be a stressful time. By using a broker with a dedicated, in-house claims team, we handle the claim on your behalf, communicating with the insurer to reach a prompt and fair resolution.

Claims handling is just one way we aim to provide a stress-free insurance experience for our clients.

**£52.1m**  
value of claims  
reported to ABG  
in 2024.





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