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Construction of new workspace at Southwold reaches halfway point

Work to transform land at the gateway of Southwold into a vibrant business community has hit a milestone.

The project to convert redundant space on the corner of Station Road and Blyth Road into a state-of-the-art work and meeting space, is designed to encourage new business into the town and increase footfall.

Construction began in November and has hit the halfway mark, with the external fabric of the building largely in place and the roof rapidly progressing.

Once it opens, The Hub will be run by business support and training provider MENTA, under its @Inc umbrella and will be the third facility in Suffolk using the model, following successful ongoing ventures in Felixstowe and Bury St Edmunds.

It will offer 24/7 access and co-working opportunities for new, emerging and existing businesses and freelancers, who need it for hot-desking purposes, a regular space, or just an alternative to home working.

@Inc Suffolk will also provide the offer of professional support and training, help with grant applications and funding, networking opportunities, meeting rooms for teams to work and collaborate and super-fast broadband.

The project has been spearheaded by Southwold Town Council, partner East Suffolk Council and grants from The Coastal Communities Fund and Suffolk Growth.

Ipswich company Mixbrow Construction was awarded the building contract, with the facility due to open early next year.

Suzanne Banks, MENTA and @incSuffolk Property Manager, said they were excited to build upon the success of The Hub's equivalent in other areas of the county.

"It's largely about us being able to accommodate whatever people would like us to. In some cases, it's giving businesses the space to grow, in others it might be that a new business needs support with accessing grants or funding, others may want a chance to network. It's very fluid, but the important thing is there will always be someone on hand to facilitate and support when and if it's needed.

“We’ve enjoyed some really successful workshops in our other facilities. We’ve welcomed 60 aspiring female entrepreneurs at an event, 46 community groups, who have used the meeting space and we’ve delivered 12 digital skills sessions in Felixstowe alone. This is in addition to providing hot desking, co-working, advice and training.”

The project is part of a wider regeneration plan for Southwold to encourage more affordable workspace and housing across the town to attract new residents and visitors all year round.

Simon Flunder, Mayor of Southwold said: “The Hub is designed to be fully inclusive. It will support our existing businesses and residents with various opportunities, but we also look forward to welcoming new people into Southwold. It is important that we create spaces such as these to benefit the future of the town and to show that it’s affordable to live and work here.”

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