

# WOMEN HELPED TO RETURN TO WORK THROUGH ORCHARD BUSINESS PARK SOCIAL VALUE FUND



A social value fund raised through a Telford & Wrekin Council build contract with Morris Property has helped women gain the skills they need for a return to the workplace.

Funding for a five week 'Women Returners' programme, hosted by Virtual Internships, was brought forward as part of the Orchard Business Park development at Hortonwood Plot 12.

The social value project offered places for up to 20 women to take part in the remote course and eight women completed the first five-week programme with more set to follow on a second course.

Morris Property has delivered 24 units for the Council's Estates and Investments team suitable for start-ups, smaller businesses and larger firms at the Telford Land Deal site which is in a prime location and benefits from Green credential such as solar PV's and EV charging stations for tenants.

The Council identified a gap in the local market at Hortonwood Plot 12 for new, small industrial units unfulfilled by the private development market.

It purchased the Hortonwood Business site from Homes England and now manages the new units through its property investment portfolio.

Virtual Internships courses target women over 19 and are fully-funded employability and personal development programmes.





Women returners who took part in the first five week programme were full of praise for the programme.

**Sue Taylor, of Telford, said:** “I definitely have more confidence now after this course. Thanks very much for the opportunity which has been very valuable.

**Motunrayo Adeleye, of Telford, added:** “Thank-you for taking me out of my comfort zone and for being very supportive. This course has really helped me to focus on getting back into work.”

**Councillor Eileen Callear (Lab), Telford & Wrekin Council’s cabinet member for Education, Employment and Visitor Economy, said:** “We are delighted to have supported this course, delivered through a social value project raised by our Estates and Investment team, sponsored by Morris Property and hosted by Virtual Internships.

Many women take a break from employment for lots of different reasons but are keen to return to work.

This short programme gives women the skills they need to get their careers back on track or start out on a completely new career pathway.”

**Trish Dovaston, Morris Property Office Manager, said:** “We are passionate about workplace equality and supporting women returning to work and this Virtual Internships programme aligned with that.

“I think if you’ve had a few years out of the workplace it can be really hard finding the headspace and the hours in the day to make the leap back.

“This programme made it really feasible for that to happen for these women and we’re really proud to have supported them on their journey.”