

# **Boss of broadband provider Truespeed says Bath businesses can ‘take pride’ in pandemic achievements**

The chief executive of internet service provider Truespeed has said the Bath business community can look back with “pride” at what it was able to achieve during a difficult period for the city.

Truespeed is set to return as the headline sponsor of the Bath Business Awards 2021 on Wednesday, November 10, at Bath Pavillion.

The event, which was not held last year due to Covid-19, will recognise the resilience of local firms in and around the historic city during the pandemic.

Truespeed, which is based on Lower Bristol Road, was itself a winner of the Small Business of the Year Award when the ceremony was last staged in 2019.



## Bath Business Awards 2021

Founded by Evan Wineburg in 2014, the broadband supplier has grown its operations and network, which has been rolled out across more than 200 communities in rural and urban areas, stretching to the outskirts of Portishead and down to Froome.

From a headcount of six, the company now employs more than 135 staff and 150 subcontractors, with plans for continued growth in the future as it seeks to connect another 450,000 properties over the next five years.

Mr Wineburg told *BusinessLive* that Truespeed has so far helped connect 9,000 families in the region with broadband, and that helping households and businesses to get online during the national lockdowns had been rewarding.

He said that from speaking to businesses of all sizes across Bath and the surrounding region, everyone had found the previous 18 months “very difficult”.

He said that while the pandemic's impact on the business hadn't been as detrimental as it had on other sectors, such as hospitality.

Mr Wineburg said: "The demand for fantastic broadband is higher but the ability to deliver it is still hampered by the fact that people can't work together as well as they did before.

"I'm not going to moan about the pandemic because that would sound trite. I'm grateful that we are in a growth sector.

"The government allowed us to continue working, we were allowed to continue connecting people all the way through because it's something that communities need.

"We were supported by the ministers to carry on. It took a lot of thinking about how we would do it safely. Could we have been better? Yeah sure, if we had all been in the building working together we would have cracked on. It's palpable actually when you see people in the same space how quickly they solve problems."

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Mr Wineburg said generosity had been needed to help some businesses to survive which “otherwise wouldn’t have”.

Truespeed played its part in that by not charging customer-facing businesses in its network for its service when they were unable to generate revenue from their workspace.

Mr Wineburg said that the amount of pressure the pandemic had put on leadership teams had been “staggering.”

Mr Wineburg said: “Some people have discovered things that they wouldn’t otherwise have known, such as resilience, contingency planning or leadership skills, people didn’t know they had.

“The community here in Bath should look back with a bit of pride, especially those who worked in the civic process, those that were helping others, those who were feeding the homeless or by providing meals for people who couldn’t afford it.

“I thought the government did well with the furlough process, not to cause complete social collapse. Recently they’ve got a few things wrong, but overall that was good play. We needed to ensure people were comfortable. I’m proud to live around Bath, I feel lucky.”

Mr Wineburg said that Truespeed felt “a part” of the city and that was why it was sponsoring the return of the Bath Business Awards in order to support its companies and business people.

He said: “It’s brilliant standing up on stage talking to a community of hundreds of brilliant people who are doing wonderful things around the city all day and all night and in the region as well, and that’s why we do it. Why wouldn’t we want to do this, if given the opportunity to support them?”

“Headline sponsor sounds like a ridiculous thing to say – we sponsor the Bath Business Awards because we just want to be part of a fantastic group of people and companies that are delivering value.

“They’re delivering into the economy, they’re giving people work, and a vision for the future, and hope, things that were in short supply during Covid when people really didn’t understand what was going on.

“Why do we sponsor the Bath Business Awards? Because it is the right thing to do.”

*Nominations for the Bath Business Awards 2021 are open until **Monday October 11**. To enter and for more information, including on how to book tickets for the event, visit the [Bath Business Awards website](#).*