Business

Champion: "Investing locally wasn't a strategy; it was instinct"

By Kevin Walker Contributor

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Champion of the week, Kevin Walker from Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions, talks through his mission to keep local organisations secure, his commitment to community projects and his vision for a digitally confident Chesterfield.

I'm Kevin Walker, founder of Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions. We're a Chesterfield-based cyber security company supporting schools, nurseries, care providers, parish councils and small businesses across **North Derbyshire** and **South Yorkshire**. This year marks 20 years in business. My focus has always been simple: help local organisations stay secure, compliant and confident in the way they use technology.

What is your organisation looking forward to?

Cyber threats are increasing, particularly in education and care, so we're expanding our managed detection and response services and compliance-led security packages. We're investing in automation, better reporting, and practical tools that make it easier for organisations to understand their risk. I want Black Swan to remain cyber-first, compliance-driven, and firmly rooted in the region.

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What sparked your decision to invest in Chesterfield or North Derbyshire and why?

I've lived here all my life. I grew up here and I'm raising my family here. Investing locally wasn't a strategy; it was instinct. If I can protect local schools and businesses from disruption, that directly benefits the community I care about.

Pete Lawrence at East Midlands Chamber has been a consistent sounding board, helping refine our positioning and connections. Adrian Williamson at Chesterfield Borough Council has offered valuable insight into local priorities. I've also been working with Joanna Moore Consultancy to explore new sectors and growth areas. Support from experienced people like Pete and Joanna challenges your thinking and provides accountability, which sharpens your direction.

How are you supporting young people?

I'm exploring opportunities to work with University of Derby law students on reviewing and strengthening our terms, conditions and policies. It's a chance for students to gain real-world commercial experience and for us to benefit from fresh legal thinking grounded in current UK regulation.

How are you supporting our communities?

I'm Chair of the Friends of Monkey Park. Over the past few years, I've led improvements including a new play area, additional seating and a table tennis table. Seeing families use the facilities we've helped improve is incredibly rewarding. It represents what community effort can achieve.

How would you describe Chesterfield and North Derbyshire, using only three words?

Proud, connected and resilient.

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A walk around the Crooked Spire and revitalised market area, followed by time in the Peak District. This area has a rare combination of heritage and open space within minutes of each other.

How do Chesterfield and North Derbyshire showcase their culture and heritage?

Through our architecture, independent businesses and community events. The Crooked Spire is iconic, but it's the people and local initiatives that keep heritage alive rather than preserved behind glass.

Chesterfield Champions have been helping to promote Chesterfield and North Derbyshire for over 15 years. What have you most enjoyed supporting during this time?

Promoting local success stories. There's a real pride when businesses collaborate instead of competing. I've particularly enjoyed supporting Tech Exchange Chesterfield, where founders encourage tech businesses to work together rather than operating in isolation. Sharing skills and networks raises standards and keeps talent within the town. Being part of that has been genuinely rewarding.

What does being a Chesterfield Champion mean to your organisation and how do you actively promote our town?

It means advocacy. I promote Chesterfield whenever I speak at events, meet partners or engage online. Our town deserves a strong voice.

What is your vision for Chesterfield and North Derbyshire in 2030?

A digitally confident town with thriving local businesses and secure schools, built on investment, collaboration and strong local enterprise.

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