



Mike Wheelhouse is a man with a good eye for a successful business plan.

The founder of Chester-based Urban Tricycles possesses a special blend of business knowhow and entrepreneurial cunning; he can spot a fledgling business idea and make it thrive.

Thriving is the best way to describe Urban Tricycles. Along with its sister business Urban Coffee, it is currently in an upward trajectory and taking the world of environmentally friendly mobile vending by storm.

Urban Tricycles builds and sells bespoke tricycles and carts to companies who use them at events and in mobile locations to sell their products. The company also sells Urban Coffee, its own blend, from the tricycle.

Mike said: "I have had this business for a few years now. I had an idea one day that rickshaws and tricycles would do well in the UK. So I imported a container load of rickshaws seven years ago from China and ended up selling them all.

"That gave me the idea to start building them ourselves. We started to get enquiries from brands. Our first one from a large brand was Bombay Sapphire Gin. We built a rickshaw for them and I could clearly see there was a market for it."

Mike's hunch was correct and the company he now co-runs with Jim Gillson is award-winning and has attracted some big clients.



He said: "We exhibited at the Ice Cream Alliance show last year and we won awards for best new products in 2018 and 2019. We are building bespoke tricycles and karts and we have deals with major brands such as Peroni, Unilever, Carlsberg and the Independent newspaper.

"We have also worked for Chester Zoo and Everton Football Club. The main thing at the moment is we have just linked with Network Rail and Transport for London. Our first contract is at St Pancras International station where we will be selling our own Urban Coffee on the platform from our own tricycle. We are in talks with Asda at the moment, having our coffee tricycles inside Asda stores."



Mike's business has clearly been steadily growing over a number of years and in the last year the Council's economic growth team have been supporting the business to help it fulfil its ongoing ambitions.

Mike said: "The Council has offered marketing support and the chance to meet with key business contacts. This support will help us grow further."

"We currently manufacture in Burnley but we will be moving an element of the manufacturing into new Council-owned business units in Dee View Business Park in Chester."

"The fact that the Council is providing that facility is good, it helps us to grow the business and take on more staff. We are quite forward thinking. I can see us outgrowing those premises before you know it as well. The enquiries are starting to come thick and fast."

This year the Council's declared a climate emergency and, among the many businesses it supports, it is working with environmentally-conscious companies such as Urban Tricycles.

Mike said: "Our tricycles are quite mobile, affordable and go in most places, they are eco- friendly. Other mobile vending vans have got to have the engine to run, which is obviously generating emissions. Our tricycles are battery operated, which is cleaner for the environment, and we are selling organic coffee."

"They are quite funky and affordable as well. They are great for start-up businesses. If you were to buy one of our coffee tricycles it would come fully integrated with a coffee trike, the machine and grinder for £12,000. People can buy a tricycle from us and we can train them up to give them the skills to be a barista."

"We are supporting the environment as a British company by making an eco- friendly tricycle serving organic coffee and putting people back into work."

This Chester-based company is conquering the UK domestic market and even has ambitions further afield too.

Mike said: "We are also dealing with the Department of International Trade who are looking to endorse our products and to showcase them overseas. We are hoping to go over to Dubai with our coffee tricycle and fly the flag that it is a British product."

Visit the Urban Tricycles website to learn more about this business and their products:

<http://www.urbantricycles.co.uk>

Follow them on twitter @Urbantricycles1

