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British business builders recognised at inaugural Economic Contributor Awards

The founders of Starling Bank and Raspberry Pi are among the winners of the inaugural Economic Contributor Awards, recognising the entrepreneurs and business builders whose companies create jobs and contribute to the UK economy through the taxes they generate.

The awards were celebrated at a lunch sponsored by Hampden Bank at The Hurlingham Club, London, on 15 September 2026, as part of Pensions & Wealth Live. The lunch was hosted by the Rt Hon Sir Jeremy Hunt MP and Martin Vander Weyer, Business Editor of The Spectator.

The 2026 recipients span banking, technology, healthcare, food, horticulture, specialist contracting, trade exhibitions and the creative industries. They include founders who started new enterprises and family business leaders who built on an existing business.

The 2026 winners

Anne Boden MBE | Starling Bank

Anne Boden founded Starling Bank in 2014, drawing on her banking career to build a new digital bank. Her award recognises the business she established and its economic contribution. She was appointed MBE in 2018 for services to financial technology.

Dr Eben Upton CBE | Raspberry Pi

Raspberry Pi founder and Chief Executive Eben Upton helped bring affordable computing to a worldwide audience. His award recognises the British technology business built around that mission. He was appointed CBE in 2016 for services to business and education.

Annabel Lui | Cutter & Squidge

Annabel Lui co-founded Cutter & Squidge with her sister Emily, developing their baking business from home-kitchen experiments and a market stall into a Soho bakery and a nationwide brand. Her award recognises the enterprise and employment created through that growth.

Charles Burke and James Burke | BLS Asbestos

Charles and James Burke each received an award for their contribution to BLS Asbestos. Having taken over the family business, they developed its specialist asbestos-removal operation, supporting skilled employment and work to make buildings safer.

The 2026 winners continued

Kevin Martin | Thomas Owen Care

Kevin Martin built Thomas Owen Care after a career in nursing and social work, opening his first care home in 1989. The business provides specialist residential care for people with complex mental-health needs. His award recognises the care enterprise he created and the employment it supports.

Phil Reynolds and Jenny Reynolds | Vendex

Phil and Jenny Reynolds received a joint award for their work building Vendex. Phil launched the vending-industry exhibition in 2003, with Jenny helping shape its practical, affordable format from the outset. Their award recognises a business that brought suppliers and buyers together and supported trade across the industry.

Nick Crabbie | Crabbies Garden Centres

Nick Crabbie founded Berwick Garden Centre in 1983. The business has grown into Crabbies Garden Centres, with three centres and around 170 year-round employees. His award recognises more than four decades of business building, local employment and economic contribution.

Dr Ben Maruthappu MBE | Cera

Doctor and entrepreneur Ben Maruthappu founded Cera to improve care at home through technology. The UK's largest home care provider, Cera runs a pioneering Back to Work programme for people who are long-term unemployed and reports £151 million in payroll taxes paid since January 2024. His award recognises the health and social-care business he has built. He was appointed MBE in 2020.

Peter Bennett-Jones CBE | PBJ Management and Tiger Aspect

Peter Bennett-Jones founded PBJ Management and helped build Tiger Aspect into a major television-production business. His award recognises his contribution as an entrepreneur in the creative industries. He was appointed CBE in 2014 for services to entertainment and charity.

Plans for the 2027 awards are under consideration. The date, venue and format will be announced in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors

The Economic Contributor Awards recognise the people behind businesses that create employment and generate UK tax receipts. The inaugural awards took place as part of Pensions & Wealth Live in September 2026. Hampden Bank sponsored the awards lunch.

Further information and event highlights: contributorawards.co.uk

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