

THE LEASING
FOUNDATION



2025

END OF YEAR REVIEW



A year of action and real progress - how the Leasing Foundation brought people together in 2025

As we reach the end of 2025, I’m struck by how much our community has done. What makes me proud, however, is not the number of events we’ve held but the way people are helping each other. Whether it’s our next-gen professionals starting out in the sector, senior leaders giving their time or the many voices talking about wellbeing and belonging, the energy has been incredible.

We’ve strengthened our leadership team, welcoming the following new board directors who bring huge experience and new ideas, broadening our reach and giving real weight to the work we do:

- Aysha Ellis-Aziz (events)
- Craig Leyland – Lombard (Sustainability)
- Ed Peck - Asset Finance Connect
- James Lovett – Funding Circle (Giving)
- James Rudolf - Acquis (Sustainability)
- John Phillipou - Paragon Bank
- Neil Temple – Lombard (Innovation)

2025 has also been a year of building and strengthening relationships across the industry. Collaboration with AFPA has allowed us to come together for good causes including taking part in the Big Quiz, the London to Paris cycle and a range of networking events. Support from our media partner, Finance Connect, has helped us share conversations with a wider audience while the FLA supported our summer fundraising event and CEO Shanika Amarasekara presented the 30 under 30 index, celebrating new talent across the sector.

We’ve raised vital funds for Coach Core, celebrated new talent and shared stories that matter. Discussions have sparked new ideas, given new insights and driven progress across a broad range of themes. Each of our streams has played a part in this, supported by volunteers who give countless hours behind the scenes (thank you to everyone involved). We look forward to doing more of the same next year!

Ylva Oertengren, Chair of the Leasing Foundation



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The EDI group has had one of its most active years yet. Pride was a particularly stand-out event – we brought the asset finance industry together for a shared entry into London Pride for the first time and this felt bold, joyful and overdue. It gave real weight to our aim of building a sector where everyone feels they belong and it has set the tone for a stronger push in 2026 as we finalise a new strategy built around the message ‘You Belong Here’.

2025 saw a full programme of events: from National Access Day in March to South Asian Heritage Month in July, along with two Defining Moments sessions tackling gender and men’s mental health. Each one created safe spaces for sharing stories and we had strong attendance and engagement at all of them.

Our flagship virtual initiatives ran again in 2025: the ‘Women’s Spotlight Series’ in March to coincide with International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month; Connect Roulette in October, which brought people together on World Inclusion Day and World Mental Health Day.

Collaboration with other streams also played a key role this year, with joint events alongside Innovation and NextGen exploring culture, behaviour, career growth and the role of diverse thinking in shaping better workplaces.

We are delighted to welcome Funding Xchange as our EDI sponsor and have spent the year shaping the next phase of our work. With a refreshed strategy, a broader intersectional focus and gender as a new strand set to launch formally in 2026, the EDI group will start the new year with a bang!



Giving

This year the industry came together to support Coach Core, raising over £40,000 and helping the charity reach even more young people. The Big Give campaign closed on an impressive £100,000, a remarkable boost for a charity that continues to change lives by helping young people from under-privileged backgrounds into work and training.

Our February senior leaders drinks and the Summer Party at the Royal Exchange grew again, bringing together more people than the year before and raising further support for Coach Core. They have become warm, lively fixtures in the industry calendar and a reminder of the power of community.

We have also begun shaping what year two of our partnership with Coach Core will look like. The plan is to deepen the relationship, draw on their expertise in working with young people and share lessons across the industry. Several firms have already opened their doors to Coach Core, inviting them to conferences and dinners, while others have helped by taking part in charity events. A special mention goes to Isaac Kennedy from Novuna, who bravely tackled the AFPA London to Paris cycle in very tough weather conditions.

Coach Core has now helped more than 1,000 young people into work and continues to make a huge difference. If anyone is interested in working more closely with the charity, please contact [Mel](#) or [James](#)





NextGen

It has been a great year for the NextGeneration Network: we've seen a rise in activity across the whole programme.

The launch of the new Industry Insights cohort will see the group take part in sessions with senior leaders across the sector from January next year. We also held our first Industry Insights alumni breakfast, giving past and present cohorts a place to meet and share their experiences.

The NextGen networking events continued to grow, drawing bigger and more engaged crowds. The November gathering at SAMA Bankside brought together 60–70 young professionals from 15 firms. The feedback and energy were excellent and it showed how much NextGen talent values a friendly, welcoming space to meet.

We also celebrated another successful 30 under 30 index, shining a light on the rising talent across the industry. The NextGen Soapbox at the AFC Conference was another highlight, giving younger voices the chance to take the stage and share their views.

Cross-stream collaboration has continued to strengthen, with joint events alongside Innovation and EDI adding depth to this year's programme.



Innovation

Innovation played a focused role this year with a two-part event series exploring how new ideas and career growth go hand in hand. Working jointly with the EDI and NextGen groups, the team co-delivered two sessions that blended insight, practical tools and real stories.

The first session in April, 'Unlocking Innovation', looked at how different viewpoints spark better thinking and help teams break out of old habits. With support from Coach Core and guest speakers including Olympic athlete Tom Bosworth, the evening focused on the value of diverse teams.

The second session turned to career development and gave early-career professionals simple advice on building confidence, navigating change and finding support.

These events showed that innovation is not only about tech or products – it is also about people, habits and culture. The group now plans to grow this work further in 2026.

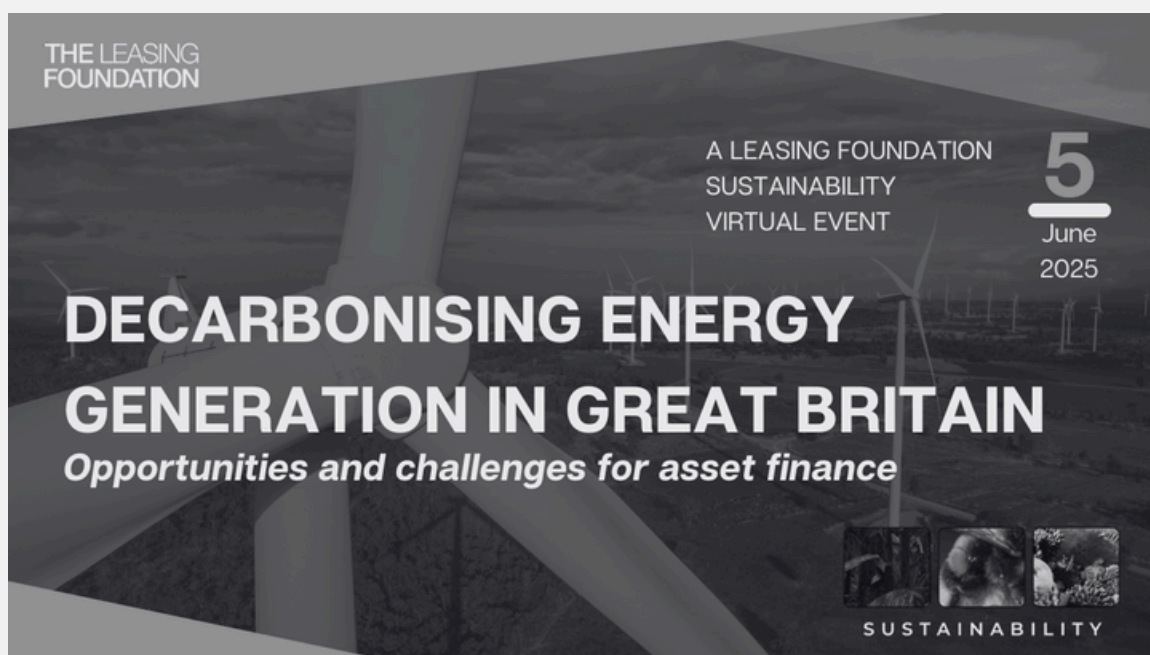


Sustainability

The Sustainability group held an interesting session in June, focusing on the transition of Great Britain's power market and the role asset finance must play in supporting sustainable energy generation. Led by Tom Betts from Aurora Energy Research, the webinar walked through changes in supply and demand, new policy measures and what these changes mean for manufacturers, suppliers and financiers.

The session highlighted two things clearly: businesses are taking greater control of their own energy needs, creating long-term opportunities for lenders and lessors willing to support decentralised, business-led generation. With reforms and incentives reshaping the market, the need for practical, finance-focused insight has never been stronger.

In 2026 there are plans to expand the Sustainability programme and we welcome anyone who wants to join us to help do that. Please contact [James](#) and [Craig](#) if you would like to join us!



Looking ahead to next year:

2025 was a year of action and real progress. We've done a lot but there's more to do in 2026. The Leasing Foundation remains dedicated to empowering the next generation, fostering inclusivity, driving innovation and championing sustainability.

Whether you're starting out or leading a team, there's a place for you here.

To get involved or find out more, contact us at hello@leasingfoundation.org or visit www.leasingfoundation.org

Thank you to everyone who has supported our journey and we look forward to seeing you all next year!

About The Leasing Foundation

At The Leasing Foundation, our mission is simple: to build a diverse, world-class community of business finance professionals and empower them to be a force for good.

We achieve this by offering opportunities for personal development, training and insights, while we collaborate and strengthen networks across the industry. Through our core streams, we address the key areas shaping the future of business finance:

- [The Innovation Initiative:](#) A hub for forward-thinkers driving industry progress
- [The Next Generation Network:](#) Supporting and inspiring the future leaders of the sector
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative:](#) Promoting inclusivity across all walks of life in the industry
- [The Sustainability Initiative:](#) Advocating for and enabling improved sustainability
- [The Giving Network:](#) Connecting businesses and charities to maximise social impact.