

BUILDING COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

How one of the UK's largest homebuilders transformed internal communication to empower every employee, from the desk to the construction site.

Welcome Centre

Bellway



From outdated tools to a bold strategy

Bellway Homes employs around 3,000 people, and only a third of them work in desk-based roles. The majority are spread across hundreds of construction sites, where communication has always been a challenge. For years, the company relied on an outdated SharePoint platform system that hadn't seen any significant updates since 2014. It contained more than seven million documents and inconsistent information, including multiple versions of core policies. As trust in the platform declined, people simply stopped using it.

Internal efforts to rebuild SharePoint failed due to limited IT resources. That moment became the catalyst for change. Bellway went to market for a modern communication solution that could scale and connect everyone across the organization — and chose Staffbase.

But this transformation was about much more than replacing an old system. It was about transforming the entire approach to communication. The Group Communications team, only two people strong, led the project from day one. They designed a platform based on employee insight, iterative development, and continuous improvement.

A 12-month testing phase with 300 employees from across the business laid the foundation. This pilot allowed for real-time feedback, early adoption, and the opportunity to refine both features and tone. It was during this phase that the new platform found its name: Pathway.

“*We chose Staffbase because we simply couldn't deliver a project like this ourselves, and they had the roadmap and the team to deliver.*”

Paul Lawler
Group Head of Communications



The rollout: Phased, pragmatic, and people-first

The rollout of Pathway was carefully planned. Bellway began with Staffbase Email, which replaced the cumbersome process of sending messages through an external agency. What used to take days could now be achieved within hours. The success of this first step gave the team confidence for the next phase. The mobile app, branded as Pathway, officially launched in May 2024 with a company-wide campaign. Every Bellway division featured posters, banners, and launch cards. A roadshow travelled across all 21 divisions in England, Scotland, and Wales, where the communications and HR teams met employees face-to-face, explaining the benefits of Pathway and showing how to access personalized content, tools, and the Mi Experience performance platform integrated within it.

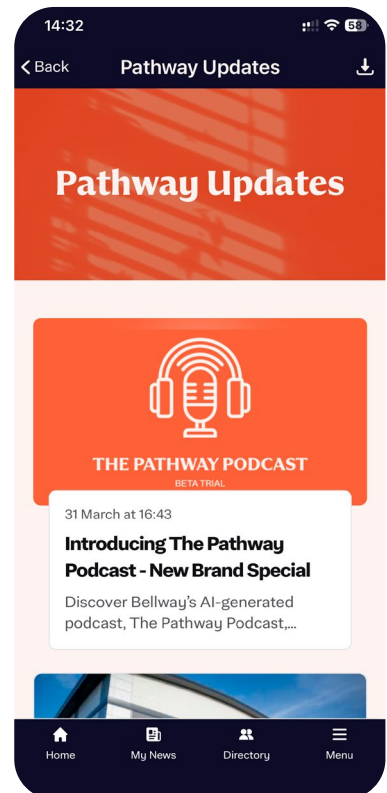
Email was repositioned as a channel for critical updates and a weekly summary, while day-to-day communication moved into Pathway. For employees, this shift meant choice, visibility, and ownership.

“We’ve gone from blasting inboxes to giving people real control. Now they choose the content they care about – and they actually engage with it.”

— Paul Lawler

The launch was driven by strong senior leadership support. The project had director level approval from the beginning, and the early positive response from employees strengthened executive engagement even further.

One area of main resistance came from concerns about privacy when downloading the app on personal devices - not all employees have corporate devices. The team addressed this directly by clarifying that Pathway existed to make employees' work lives easier, not to monitor them. That reassurance was key in building trust and adoption.

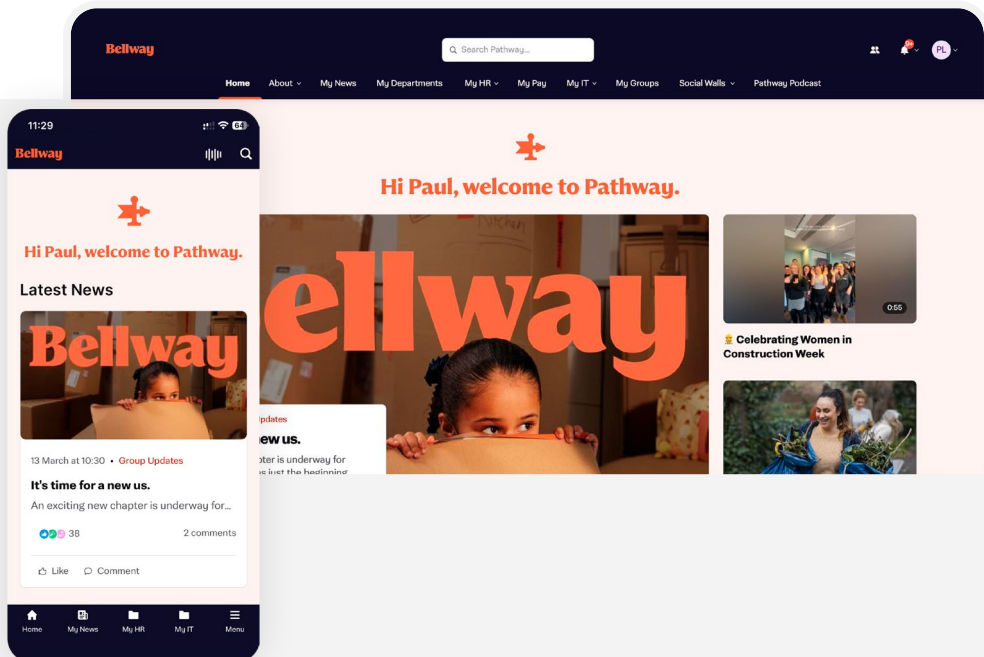


Business impact: Engagement that goes beyond metrics

The impact was immediate. Within weeks of launch, 27% of employees mentioned Pathway in Bellway's annual Employee Engagement Survey — an impressive figure for a platform that had been live for only a month. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with employees calling it “brilliant,” “modern,” and “a big step in the right direction.”

Pathway quickly became the trusted source for everything from policies to performance information. When market rumors about a possible acquisition surfaced, Bellway used Pathway to share its first public statement internally within minutes of the official market announcement, which was outside of standard work hours. Despite this, more than 1,500 employees read the update that same evening, reinforcing Pathway's role as the single source of truth. Previously, Bellway employees would have read about the news in the media, or heard from the business at the start of the next working day.

Over time, the platform evolved to include a digital brochure system focused on build-quality best practices, a Benefits Hub developed in response to early analytics, and access to mental-health advocates. The “Pride in the Job” content hub, with videos and interviews from award-winning site managers, became a favorite feature, bringing best practices and pride stories using a range of media types, directly to teams across the UK.



Cultural and organisational impact: Bridging the gap

Reaching non-desk employees has long been a challenge in construction, but Bellway's 94% adoption rate tells a different story. Pathway gave everyone, from site managers to office staff, a shared space and a shared voice.

Segmentation made it possible for employees to see only the content relevant to their role, location, or team, while local leaders used Pathway to recognize success and strengthen communication within their divisions. Video storytelling proved particularly powerful, with short clips from site managers creating authentic, human moments of connection.

“*It's not just a comms tool. It's a cultural asset. Even small interactions, like a liked post from a Senior Leader, go a long way toward making people feel seen.*”

— Paul Lawler

The phrase “It's on Pathway” has now become part of everyday language at Bellway, reflecting how deeply the platform has embedded itself into the company's culture, by encouraging employees to self-serve using Pathway.



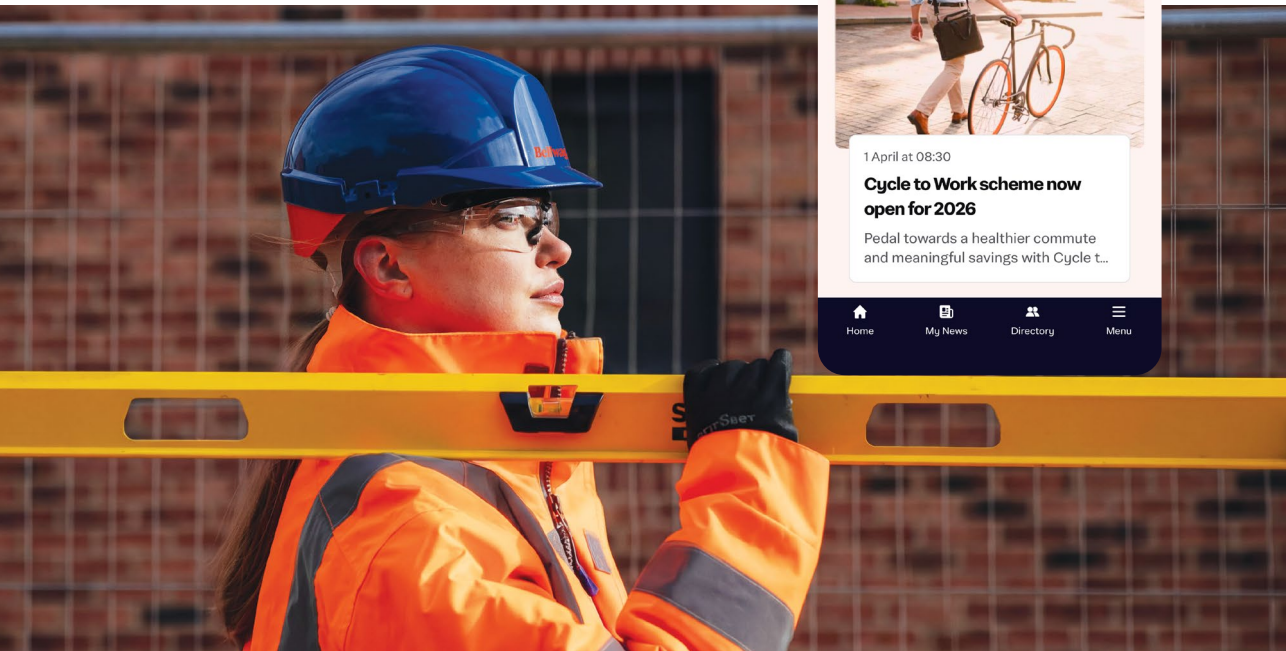
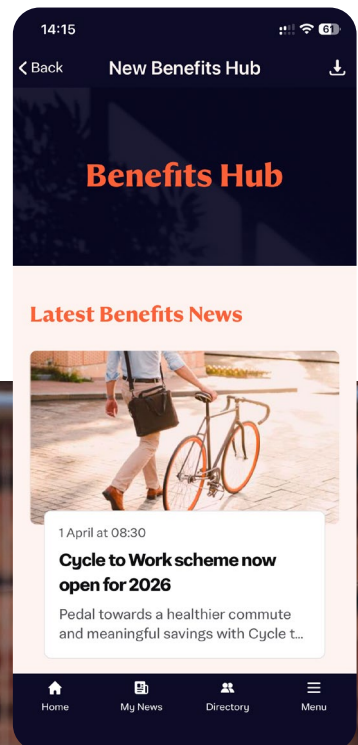
Continuous improvement: Using data to drive smarter communication

The team's approach is guided by data. Analytics inform every decision - from scaling back underused content to doubling down on formats that drive engagement, such as user-generated stories and competitions. One of the first insights revealed that employee benefits were among the most visited pages, which led to the creation of a dedicated Benefits Hub with richer and more detailed content.

Bellway also values its collaboration with the Staffbase product teams, often testing beta features and providing feedback to help shape the platform's evolution. The ongoing goal is to bring more tools and processes into Pathway to reduce the need for third-party logins and create a seamless daily experience.

“*We're using real behaviour to shape our strategy and focusing only on what matters most to our people.*”

— Paul Lawler



Looking back – and ahead

For Bellway, the Pathway project marked a genuine transformation in how communication is seen and practiced across the business. What started as an urgent need to replace outdated technology has evolved into a living, breathing ecosystem that connects, informs, and inspires. Employee satisfaction scores now exceed 90%, and voluntary turnover has dropped by more than 19% in just 12 months. For a company spread across so many sites and functions, those numbers represent far more than metrics — they reflect a new culture of inclusion and engagement.



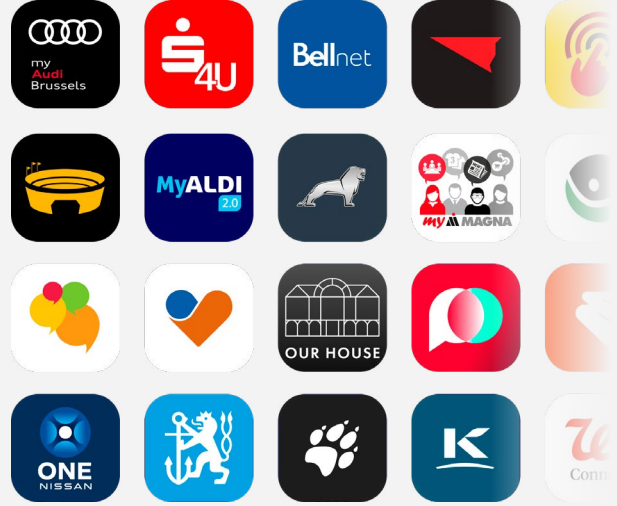
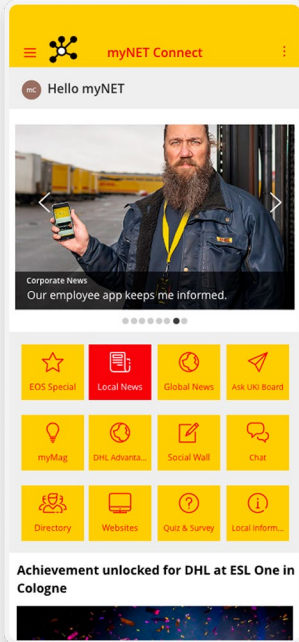
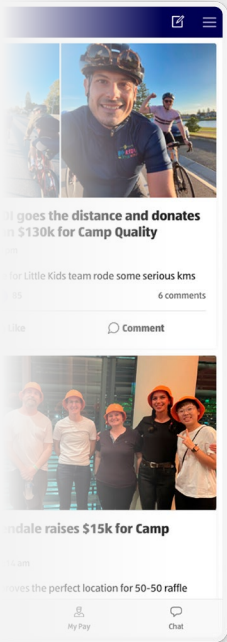
“*It’s the biggest transformation we’ve ever made in internal communications, and we delivered it on time and on budget. That’s something I’m really proud of.”*

— Paul Lawler

Bellway’s advice to others

Start with what is broken and be honest about it but keep it simple and remember the end user experience. Secure IT buy-in early, even if communications lead the project. Focus on mobile, especially for non-desk employees, and give people the freedom to engage in their own way. Above all, listen to feedback and let it guide the future, while using data to concentrate on improving what works well while spending less time on what doesn’t.

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