

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

29th May 2010 Issue No.: 109

1. Supporting Local Business With Laura Sandys MP

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber works in close cooperation with the Dover District Chamber of Commerce (established 1850) to drive down costs for our members and increase their turnover. As the main business support agencies in the East Kent coastal business community, the Thanet and Dover chambers also have a responsibility to support the local economy as a whole. We aim to keep companies informed of changes in national policies and publicise how they can benefit from amendments to existing laws, new legislation and other initiatives from government. "Supporting Local Business" is the title of a business networking breakfast on Friday 18th June 2010. The main speaker will be Laura Sandys, newly elected Member of Parliament for South Thanet and Sandwich. Laura began her political life at the earliest possible age; her pram was adorned with political campaign posters. She has owned and operated two small businesses herself and has a keen desire for Thanet SMEs to take full advantage of the 'green collar work' opportunities that could follow from establishing an Eco-Economic Zone within our local borders. Fully aware that we should be making more of our natural and historic assets to generate high-margin non-seasonal visitors, Laura will comment on new government policies to stimulate growth and outline her "green and grand vision for Thanet". Open to Chamber members and non-members alike, the business networking breakfast will take place in Ramsgate on 18th June from 0730 hrs. Tickets cost £12.00 for Chamber members and £15.00 for non-members. Booking is essential. To book your place or to find out more information, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Supporting Local Business Breakfast".

2. Thanet Business Exhibition

The Thanet Business Exhibition has secured the sponsorship of the Kent Messenger Group and will be advertised extensively throughout East Kent. Commencing at 1000 hrs on Friday 11th June 2010 at G Casino Westwood Cross, Broadstairs CT10 2BF, the exhibition is expected to attract buyers from all sectors of the local economy. Ample car parking is available on-site. For more details, contact the Chamber Marketing and Membership Officer, Graham Rayner, tel: 07899 873535 or email manager@tekc.co.uk.

3. Thanet on TV

This Chamber is dedicated to supporting our local area at every opportunity. Regular readers will know that the Thanet & East Kent Chamber often features on the radio, television and in the press. Usually Chamber staff and directors are able to research the issues of the moment thoroughly, consult with local enterprises and give a reasonable response to the interviewer or reporter. At the back of our minds is always the conviction that it is our Chamber members who are important and it is their interests that we represent. Occasionally, we are interviewed without any notice or the opportunity to collect our thoughts. Such was the case when approached by Business News South East after our recent business networking breakfast at Kent International Airport. Thus, we trust that members will be somewhat forgiving in viewing the results at <http://www.businessnewssoutheast.com/869/news/business-optimism-in-thanet/>

4. More On Manston

The Thanet & East Kent Insider of 30th October 2009 predicted that the expansion of Kent International Airport at Manston might lead to scheduled flights to Edinburgh and Manchester. The new daily flights by Flybe linking Manston to Edinburgh began last Thursday. We share the view of Cllr Bob Bayford, Leader of Thanet District Council, that "The start of the Flybe flights from Manston to Edinburgh is a great boost for the whole area" and we agree with Sandra Matthews Marsh, Chief Executive of Visit Kent, that the new flights are "great news for the county's tourism businesses". The razzamatazz that greeted the first flight included the pipes and drums of the magnificent 5 SCOTS Battalion based in Canterbury and liberal quantities of wine from Chapel Down of West Kent. The winery prides itself on its corporate values of being "tolerant, caring, enterprising, ingenious, creative, stylish, energizing and occasionally eccentric". Perhaps it is fortunate that Flybe and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders do not subscribe to all the values of Chapel Down, but enterprise and creativity were certainly features of the welcome given to the first flight. After the launch had been duly celebrated in fine style, there was one piece of news that left a lasting good taste in the mouth, an après-goût worthy of the best claret, and that was the announcement of a Sunday to Friday daily service linking Manston and Manchester from 6th September this year. Tom Wilson, Chief Executive of Infratil Airports Europe, has no doubts that the Manchester flights represent "a vote of confidence, not only in the airport and the people that work here, but also in Kent as a short break destination." So say all of us.

5. When Can I Catch a Flight to Edinburgh?

Edinburgh Manston Service

27th May 2010 – 26th March 2011

Sunday - Friday:	Departs Edinburgh 1050 hrs, arrives Manston 1220 hrs
	Departs Manston 1245 hrs, arrives Edinburgh 1415 hrs
Saturday:	Departs Edinburgh 1450 hrs, arrives Manston 1620 hrs
	Departs Manston 1645 hrs, arrives Edinburgh 1815 hrs

6. When Can I Catch a Flight to Manchester?

Manchester Manston Service

6th September 2010 – 30th October 2010

Monday to Friday: Departs Manchester 1040 hrs, arrives Manston 1150 hrs
 Departs Manston 1215 hrs, arrives Manchester 1325 hrs
Sunday: Departs Manchester 1145 hrs, arrives Manston 1255 hrs
 Departs Manston 1320 hrs, arrives Manchester 1430 hrs

30th October 2010 – 26th March 2011

Monday to Friday: Departs Manchester 1040 hrs, arrives Manston 1150 hrs
 Departs Manston 1215 hrs, arrives Manchester 1325 hrs
Sunday: Departs Manchester 1225 hrs, arrives Manston 1335 hrs
 Departs Manston 1400 hrs, arrives Manchester 1510 hrs

All flights can be booked via www.flybe.com.

7. Free Training

Chamber member Profile Development and Training is offering free courses for employees and volunteers who do not currently hold a level 2 qualification, equivalent to a grade A to C at GCSE. For those who already have a level 2 qualification or higher, there is a negotiable employer contribution of £200. The courses are available to companies with fewer than 250 employees. Successful candidates may elect to continue their studies with funded training accredited by OCR, Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations, in the following subject areas; TQ (IT for Users) Level 2, Business and Administration Level 2, Customer Service Level 2, Team Leading Level 2 and Adult Literacy and Numeracy. For more information, contact Profile Development & Training Director, Andy Gibbon, tel: 01843 609300 or come to see his stand at the Thanet Business Exhibition at G Casino, Westwood Cross on Friday 11th June 2010.

8. News From Dover

Earlier today saw the launch of Dover Saturday Market in Dover town centre. Thanks to the full support of Dover Town Council, Dover District Chamber of Commerce launched the Saturday market to run every Saturday until the end of the year. Designed specifically to increase footfall in the high street shops, the first day of trading was hailed as a great success with the Town Mayor, Cllr Sue Jones, being one of the first eager buyers to take advantage of the bargains to be found on the many stands in and around the central area. Music and a Hog Roast greeted all visitors. Despite some initial misgivings from local traders, shops were supportive and grateful for the hordes of new buyers attracted by the street stalls and enlivened street scene. As one passer-by put it to our roving Thanet & East Kent Insider reporter, "This is just what Dover needs. It brightens up the place and brings some life back to the town". The organisers expect more stallholders to join as news of the market spreads. Cruise ship companies have already expressed an interest in encouraging their passengers to visit on market days.

9. Policies for Healthy Profits

Healthy employees help a healthy company achieve healthy profits. For this reason, Thanet & East Kent Chamber works closely with the Eastern & Coastal NHS. We very much welcome recent initiatives to take more account of business needs in assessing funding priorities. As one senior NHS director put it at a joint meeting, "In our hospitals and surgeries, we deal with the results, not the causes. We must consider housing, schools and the workplace in promoting measures to improve the health of our residents and workers". Submissions to the new Health Plan for NHS Eastern and Coastal include a plea for more fitness classes for the over-fifties and greater awareness that minor ailments should be treated by the family doctor and not routinely brought to the Accident & Emergency department of a busy hospital. Schools are encouraged to share best practice through the Healthy Schools programme. There is a particular concern about obesity among children in reception classes and year 6. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber's submission notes that there is a clear statistical correlation between poor health and unemployment and states that "If Predict and Prevent is to hold sway over Find and Fix, we need to find a greater role for the private sector in influencing health policies and priorities across the region." We also acknowledge that our members have a responsibility as "There is a duty for employers to give more prominence to health issues on their internal training programmes, HR policies and company handbooks." As in all such matters, we are keen to represent the views of Chamber members fairly and accurately. Please send any comments by email to admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "NHS Health Plan Comments".

10. Photographs

Images from some events in the last year including, the recent Hotels & Restaurants Forum, are available to view and purchase from our official photographer whose masterpieces can be seen and appreciated at www.photoboxgallery.com/ddcc.

11. Service Without a Smile

Hotels and restaurants feature frequently in the Thanet & East Kent Insider. This is perhaps not surprising given the role of tourism in East Kent and the promise of significant new business from the Open Championship in July 2011, new flights to Manston, the high-speed rail link and more trade from ferries and cruise ships. A lively and positive correspondence with members suggests that there is general agreement that the Chamber should continue and even increase our efforts to promote tourism. We could take a cue from the King James's bible and comment on the role of faith, hope and charity in business, but in the tourism marketing mix, it might be more appropriate to add, "And now price, quality and service, these three; but the

greatest of these is service". After all, good service is often what provokes satisfied customers to return and bad service is what illustrates the conversations of unhappy customers for months. One Chamber member was determined to tell us his account of service received at a hotel. We have our doubts about this story, but readers must judge for themselves. Mr and Mrs Robinson were travelling from Newcastle to Manston to catch a flight to Jersey. Fatigued from their long drive and eager to celebrate their holiday in style, they decided to stop for the night at a posh hotel in London. Arriving late, they checked in but managed just four hours of sleep before descending to reception to check out at six-thirty the following morning. Presented with a bill for £345 for the night, Mr Robinson asked how on earth the hotel could charge so much for such a short stay. He fulminated loudly about the excessive cost. Not wishing to alarm any other early risers, the receptionist called for the night manager who greeted the Robinsons sternly and said that the hotel provided a heated swimming pool and a business centre which were expensive to operate. He continued that the hotel provided a comprehensive entertainment package in its main hall with top acts appearing as well as a well-known celebrity who had appeared in East Enders. He then listed a series of additional facilities the hotel had available. During this extended narrative, Mr Robinson greeted each allegedly unique selling point with the exclamation, "But we didn't use it". The manager was adamant and answered each time, "Ah, but you could have, they are all here". The manager refused to budge an inch and thrust the offending invoice into Mr Robinson's face. With great reluctance, Mr Robinson produced his cheque book, scribbled furiously and, after adding his signature with an angry flourish, handed it over to the manager. "Thank you, sir" said the manager with a new-found civility. Then he read the words on the cheque. "What's the meaning of this?" he growled, "You have made out the cheque for just £100, not the £345 on the invoice." "Quite correct", said Mr Robinson, "but I am charging you £245 for sleeping with my wife". The manager protested, "That's ridiculous. I didn't." Mr Robinson smiled sweetly and said, "Ah, but you could have, she was here".

12. Our Sponsors

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It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.
For details of membership, email admin@tekc.co.uk

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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