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*** Welcome to the Thanet & East Kent Insider ***

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from

Thanet & East Kent Insider

6 May 2008

1. Property Forum Follow Up

A delegation appointed by the Chamber Property Forum visited the leader of Thanet District Council (TDC), Sandy Ezekiel, and the TDC Head of Environmental Services, Brian White, on 1 May 2008. The group featured Dr Fiona Sherriff of Margate Harbour Arm Ltd & Ramsgate Estates, Terence Painter of Terence Painter Properties, Mick German of MPG Properties and David Foley of Thanet & East Kent Chamber. Among the issues discussed were the marketing of Thanet, business rate relief on commercial property, the Westwood Cross Development and the Marlowe Innovation Centre. The delegation was aware of its duty to represent the views of all Chamber members with property interests and was keen to brief TDC on members' concerns and the challenges posed to business by recent changes in national legislation. Sandy Ezekiel agreed to consider all the points raised and to arrange a meeting with the local MPs and the appropriate MEP when the delegation will have the opportunity to represent Thanet & East Kent businesses to some of the key decision-makers.

2. Estate Agencies

Today's Daily Telegraph reports that 150 branches of estate agencies are closing every week in the UK. The root of the downturn seems to be a dramatic decrease in the number of approved mortgages which now show a year-on-year fall of 44%. The British Association of Removers reports the worst trading position for 20 years with a decline of 40%. Thanet remains buoyant with no local estate agency closures notified to the Chamber. There is undoubted optimism about Thanet's future. In a recent visit to the Chamber, Chris Broom, Business Development Manager of Locate in Kent, described Thanet as "the fastest growing part of Kent" and he should know. [We have since learned of the closure of Spicer McColl offices in Ramsgate & Birchington]

3. Confidence in Thanet

Earlier today a high powered delegation from Brachers Solicitors visited the Thanet Chamber. With over 230 staff and 21 partners, Brachers is one of the largest practices in the South East. The visitors included the Managing Partner, the Head of Corporate & Commercial, a corporate lawyer, the Sales Manager and the Marketing Manager. After a full day touring the area and visiting local businesses, the general consensus was that Thanet is poised to enjoy exceptional economic growth. The group noted the benefits to the area stemming from Manston where the briefing from Commercial Group Properties confirmed the figure of 3,000 jobs to be created by the China Gateway. A visit to the Royal Sands development now being constructed in Ramsgate was indicative of the growing confidence of investors in Thanet. The arts were not ignored as the group saw first hand the artists' studios being built at Margate Harbour. A supportive Thanet District Council embellished the positive opinions and the party returned to Maidstone, Reigate and Eastbourne with a positive impression of Thanet and a new-found respect for the undoubted vigour and resilience of local entrepreneurs. A report on the China Gateway is still available to all members. Please email the chamber to admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line, "China Gateway Report".

4. Positive about disability

Moore Communication offers companies bespoke training on disability issues and advises on premises and working practices. If you wish your company to be more disability friendly or you simply want to

persuade disabled people to spend their cash with you, contact Moore Communication, tel: 01843 230449.

5. Petrol Prices

The cheapest petrol in Thanet reported to the Chamber is at Pegwell Bay Service Station and Ramsgate Service Station where it retails at 109.9p per litre. Why is Tesco Extra in Broadstairs charging 110.9p a litre for unleaded petrol when Asda in Sturry Road Canterbury posts a price of 107.9p? Sir Terry Leahy of Tesco often quotes the store's core values of "No-one tries harder for customers" and "Every little helps". Here are two questions from the Chamber to our Tel, 'Can you try a little harder please?' and "Who is the little helping?"

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