

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

25th September 2010 Issue No.: 126

1. £3.5 Million Pounds To Local Economy

Thanet & East Kent Chamber, the largest business support body in Thanet, has partnered with Thanet College, the largest training provider, in a pioneering initiative that promises to give a huge boost to the local economy. At a Chamber business networking breakfast last Tuesday at the Fayreness Hotel, Broadstairs, new College Principal, Graham Razey, announced to a packed room that £3.5 million of the College's budget that is currently being spent on suppliers from outside the area will be switched to local companies "wherever possible". Almost every sector of the East Kent economy stands to benefit from this new policy. Chamber Chief Executive said afterwards: "This is a wonderful example of business engagement at its very best. Thanet College is leading the way in working with the private sector." Graham Razey declared: "The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is at the heart of the business community. We will go local wherever possible and look forward to working with East Kent companies of all sizes". All current valid Thanet & East Kent Chamber members are on a classified supplier list in the possession of Thanet College.

2. Thanet Offshore Windfarm Opening

Readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider have received regular updates on the progress of Vattenfall's £780 million windfarm project off the Thanet coast. The official opening last Thursday saw dignitaries, press and guests board the chartered P&O Pride of Burgundy at Ramsgate port. After a short trip, the vessel moored on the edge of the array of 100 wind turbines. It was quite appropriate that as the ceremony began a gentle breeze accompanied the first speaker, Cllr Bob Bayford. As Leader of Thanet District Council, he congratulated Vattenfall on completing the project on time. Vattenfall's Swedish President, Øystein Løseth, was next to speak. In flawless English, he managed to thank everyone on the top deck and reserved some special words of praise for Thanet College which had provided the entertainment and prepared the excellent food. Last on the podium was Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, who resisted the temptation to reply in Swedish. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to wind energy. He lamented that the UK has "One of the worst records in Europe on renewable energy. We are 25th out of 27 member states". He continued: "We are playing in the Conference League and we want to play in the Premier League." Perhaps with the prospect of a local Marine Energy Research & Development Park in mind, he added: "We are in a unique position to become a world leader in this industry."

3. Up Close and Personal With Øystein Løseth

In an exclusive interview with the Thanet & East Kent Insider, Vattenfall's President confided that it was not a simple matter to expand the current windfarm by just adding extra wind turbines. Any expansion would require infrastructure changes that would need to be part of new facilities both on land and offshore. He pointed out the technical challenges presented by the marine location. Seawater and adverse weather conditions posed particular problems for offshore generation. When asked if he thought the recent troubles experienced by BP in the Gulf of Mexico strengthened the case for windpower, he said that the oil spill had caused him to reflect on the importance of safety issues, especially with regard to nuclear power.

4. News From Dover

Our associates at Dover District Chamber of Commerce allowed the Thanet & East Kent Chamber to take centre stage in an interview on BBC Radio Kent which can be heard until 28 September 2010 by clicking on

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p00b1k8h/Breakfast_with_John_Warnett_and_Clare_McDonnell_22_09_2010

and fast forward to 0:42:00. The broadcast examines the cruise ship business in Dover and the wealthy passengers who “are not short of a bob or two”. The visitor from Bicester Village, “130 well-known brand names Dior, Armani, D&G” will be visiting the Chamber in Thanet on 5th October. Included in the programme is a meeting at Manston Airport and Quex Park. The following day will be spent in Dover.

5. Save Your Balance Sheet From £93,880 Of Stress

We are grateful to Lynn Marchant, who manages the Kent Mindful Employer Service, for drawing our attention to a useful document, “Work-related stress, What the law says” which has just been published following consultation with four national bodies; the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), the Health and Safety Executive, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and Health, Work and Well-being. Stress is defined as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”. The booklet relates the case of ‘Young v The Post Office [2002] EWCA Civ’. Maurice Young was a workshop manager at a Post Office depot in Scarborough who suffered a breakdown as the result of ‘overwork and lack of training on new systems’. When he returned to work four months later, he was given the same workload as before and in consequence went sick again after seven weeks. The subsequent court case resulted in an award of £93,880 in damages to Mr Young plus costs. Whatever your view of psychiatric illnesses, employers who fail to take into account the mental health of their workforce are liable to face considerable stress if asked to pay damages on this scale. For a free copy of the booklet, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line “Work Related Stress Guide”.

6. New Legislation for Temporary Workers

The Agency Workers Regulations (AWR) are expected to be introduced on 1 October 2011 producing radical changes in the way agency workers can be treated. Temporary workers employed for fewer than 12 weeks on a contract will soon be entitled to access what is called ‘collective facilities’; childcare services, canteen facilities, company transport services and notification of vacancies. After 12 weeks on an assignment, agency workers’ relevant terms and conditions of employment must be no less favourable than they would have been if hired direct to do the same job. Adecco is providing free booklets and arranging seminars to update employers on the new arrangements. Among the guest speakers booked is Neil Carberry, Head of Employment and Pensions at the Confederation of British Industry. For details, email Mary.CAMPBELL@adecco.co.uk with the subject line “AWR Info”.

7. G Casino

Sherrill Hawker, the popular Sales & Events Manager at G Casino, is now back at work after an absence of five weeks. She assures the Chamber that a networking session at G Casino will go ahead in October and she is planning a Be Gorgeous event for November. Interested parties can contact Sherrill on her direct line, tel: 01843 579361, or via the G Casino switchboard, tel: 01843 579999.

8. Congratulations to Robin Evans

The Boys & Maughan Marketing Manager, Robin Evans, has just returned from cycling from London to Paris to raise funds for the Everyman Campaign which raises awareness about testicular cancer. Robin’s ride started with a 90-mile pedal through the Kent countryside, followed by three stages of 70 miles a day before arriving in Paris at the Eiffel Tower. On the website at <http://www.justgiving.com/RobinEvans-London2Paris2010-Everyman> Rob shares a few sobering thoughts with the words: “In the past 18 months, 3 good friends of mine have been diagnosed with cancer, only one of them is still with us. With the great work that Everyman does we can hope to increase the survival rate in the future.” After reading about the Everyman Campaign, all male readers will have very reason to keep their eye on the ball.

9. Solar Panels On Your Roof

David Batten of the well-respected cost management consultancy, Auditel (UK) Ltd, has contacted the Chamber with details of the government’s ‘feed-in’ scheme. As he puts it: “An average 3 bed house with a south facing roof tiled with photo-cells could expect to receive about £900 p.a. from energy directed to the grid at preferential rates and a further £100 off its electricity bills. It’s not all honey though and these systems cost about £12,000 to install.

Payback is after about twelve years. Over the guaranteed 25 year scheme, home-owners can expect to make about £20k. The real payback is with commercial properties. Schemes are available to fund the installation and get revenue during the normal 10 to 20 year lease period. This makes it attractive from both a commercial and environmental point of view.” For more details on this and how to cut costs in your business, contact David Batten direct by email to batten353@aol.com.

10. Boost Your Business With Film

One of the stars of Vattenfall’s celebrations last Thursday was Thanet & East Kent Chamber member, Lavender Blue Media. Commissioned by the Swedish Energy giant to make a film about the project, Lavender Blue Media used their local knowledge and technical expertise to show a brilliant set of sequences that gave a breath-taking overview of the 35 square kilometres of the world’s largest offshore windfarm; much of it from the air. Producer Claire Ashford drew on her experience at one of the South East’s leading digital content creation agencies to produce an accompanying press pack of high definition video scenes of a similar stunning quality. East Kent companies wishing to join the rush for online video content on their websites should know that Clare has recently acquired an animation studio which has proved to be an effective and economical means to explain complicated processes. A list of satisfied customers that includes Skanska, NHS, Fireco and Kent County Council suggests that Lavender Blue Media is enjoying the sweet smell of success. To enhance the attraction of your company’s products and services, contact Claire direct by email to info@lavenderbluemedia.com or by telephone to 01795 424252.

11. Visit Kent, Please

The Thanet & East Kent Insider has often commented on tourism issues. We now know that “seaside tourism in England and Wales is by any standards a large industry. In terms of employment it is comparable to the telecommunications sector and larger than the motor industry, aerospace, pharmaceuticals or steel.” We have learned also that “a substantial British seaside tourist industry remains alive and well and seems even to have been growing over the last decade. For the future, the industry has a potentially important contribution to make not only to seaside towns but also to the British economy as a whole.” For this information, we must be grateful to the report of June this year called “The Seaside Tourism Industry in England Wales” written by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The East Kent coastal business community has an especial interest in seaside tourism. With a fast-growing airport at Manston and a port at Dover that last year welcomed 13,350,000 passengers, many local companies are sensitive to changes in the number of tourists who stay in the area. Fortunately, we can rely on Visit Kent to keep us informed with up-to-date statistics. Since the excellent Visit Kent Business Barometer moved from quarterly publication to the current monthly schedule, it has become an essential guide to many hotel operators and managers of attractions. No-one can accuse the Visit Kent Chief Executive of letting the grass grow under her feet. The day after the Thanet Offshore Windfarm opened, Sandra Matthews Marsh posted a photograph and text on the website at www.mykent.co.uk extolling the potential for tourism. She even managed to quote accurately Bob Bayford’s opening address: “Kent is known as the Garden of England and this is now the Garden’s biggest water feature” which is more than some of the national newspapers managed. The lady will go far.

12. Statistics

Modern probability theory tells us that if there are 23 people in a room, there is a 50% chance that two of them will have the same birthday. With 57 people, the probability rises to 99%. If you find that difficult to accept, then we suspect that most people would feel the same. Statisticians live in a different world, as the account sent to us by one Chamber member illustrates. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave readers to judge for themselves. “John and Bernard were statisticians. Uneasy in many social situations, they tended to spend a lot of their free time together. Last summer, they decided to hire some guns to go shooting in the woods. After a fruitless tramp all afternoon, they were just about to return to base when they spied a pigeon perched contentedly half-way up a tree. By silent and mutual agreement, John and Bernard raised their guns together and fired simultaneously. John missed by two feet to the right. Bernard erred on the left by the same amount. The pigeon, not unduly perturbed, took flight and disappeared happily into the distance. John said: “Great shooting Bernard. On average, I think we got it.”

13. Our Sponsors

Girlings Solicitors has been managing the legal affairs of commercial and private clients for over a century. Twenty-six partners and one hundred and twenty members of staff ensure a comprehensive range of services from the local offices in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay and Margate. Offices in France and Spain complement specialist departments for charities, individuals and companies. For details, telephone 01843 220274. Express By Holiday Inn took on the daunting task of restoring the former Prospect Inn at Minster. The result is a spectacular hotel that combines the best of Oliver Hill's 1930s design with ultra modern facilities and technological support. Conveniently located for business guests and holiday makers in East Kent, the meeting rooms and 105 bedrooms are available at competitive prices throughout the year. For details, telephone 01843 820250. Adecco is the world's largest HR solutions company offering a comprehensive service of temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, outplacement, career services, training and consulting. Officially designated as a 2009 British Superbrand, Adecco is represented in Thanet and Dover by its Broadstairs office, tel: 01843 609292. CARISS design, install and support education and business computing systems as East Kent's leading specialist company in Open Source Software. To lower your carbon footprint, reduce your power consumption and adopt a thin client system, call CARISS, tel: 01843 823724. Mach Associates are the high-fliers in providing Internet technologies and specialist software solutions with a particular expertise in servicing the travel industry. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and with ISO9001 accreditation, Mach Associates also offers reduces telecom operating cost through VOIP/PBX phone systems, tel: 0870 321 9986. Sota Connect offers a comprehensive IT service covering best-value voice, data and Internet services for companies of all sizes as well as public sector organisations. The company operates two state-of-the-art data centres of over 10,000sq ft. Sota Connect owns and operates a unique 200km fibre network from London to Ramsgate with high bandwidth Internet access giving superfast Internet connections, tel: 0800 072 2420.

© David Foley September 2010



David Foley
Chief Executive, Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited
Industrial Professor, Thanet College
Fellow, Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce
Tel: +44 (0) 1843 609289
Fax: +44 (0) 1843 609291
Email: davidfoley@tekc.co.uk
Mobile: +44 (0) 7967 284850

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited
Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited (TEKC) is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 4518138. Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited, Kent Innovation Centre, Thanet Reach Business Park, Millennium Way, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2QQ. Tel: 01843 609289 Fax: 01843 609291 TEKC is not VAT Registered. Important: This e-mail may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient it may be unlawful for you to read, copy, distribute, disclose or otherwise use the information used in this e-mail. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, please telephone, fax or e-mail us immediately. Errors and omissions may occur in the contents of this e-mail arising out of or in connection with data transmission, network malfunction or failure, machine or software error or malfunction, or operator error. TEKC accepts no responsibility for any such errors or omissions and you are advised to confirm the accuracy of the contents of this e-mail before relying on it for any purpose. All the information in this email is written in good faith and believed to be correct at the time of writing. TEKC cannot be held responsible for any agreements, financial transactions or liabilities incurred in relation to any of the companies, organisations or events

mentioned in this email. You are advised to seek the appropriate professional advice before undertaking any financial transaction or incurring any liability of any description.