

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

**2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010      Issue No.: 127**

### **1. Business Engagement At Its Very Best**

Such has been the huge response to the article last week announcing the pot of £3.5 million pounds available to local companies wishing to supply Thanet College that media organisations throughout the South East have taken an interest. The latest is the BBC which is contemplating making a programme on this pioneering scheme which has seen Thanet College and the Thanet & East Kent Chamber partner in an initiative that may prove to be a template for Further Education colleges throughout the country. Readers will recall that Thanet College has identified £3.5 million pounds of spending that it currently uses for purchases of products and services from companies outside the area. At a Thanet & East Kent Chamber business networking breakfast, the enterprising new Principal of Thanet College, Graham Razy, confirmed that he is actively seeking to switch spending to local companies that can provide the appropriate price, quality and service. This is real money to be fed directly into the local economy. Senior figures in education are often accused of being divorced from the realities of the private sector. Here we have an example of business engagement at its very best. To register your company as a potential supplier, Chamber members should email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Thanet College Supplier Form Chamber Member". Non-members of the Thanet & East Kent or Dover District Chambers of Commerce should email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Thanet College Supplier Form Non-Member".

### **2. Obstructing The Queen's Highway**

We are grateful to James Lee of the Kent Highway Services Team for drawing our attention to a new policy governing obstructions. All retailers please take note. Anyone wishing to place an A-board on the highway now requires a licence. James and his colleagues will be visiting East Kent "over the next few weeks to speak to and inform the premises with A-boards in your area about the new licence". More details are available direct by email to [khsenforcementteam@kent.gov.uk](mailto:khsenforcementteam@kent.gov.uk) with the subject line "KHS Management of Temporary Obstructions Policy" or you may prefer to telephone 01622 358762.

### **3. How Are We Doing?**

Kent County Council's ever excellent Research & Intelligence team informs us that unemployment in Kent is falling. The Thanet & East Kent Insider looks at year-on-year trends and is delighted to note the continuing fall in jobless figures across the county. Again, Shepway continues to disappoint with a mere 9 jobs added since August 2009. Star of the show currently is Sevenoaks with a fall of 19.2%, justifying the wisdom and foresight of Lamborghini which opened its Kent dealership there earlier this year. If sales of this prestigious Italian marque continue to rise, we will have to change our much quoted description of the recession in West Kent which is currently "Deprivation in West Kent is having three Jaguars instead of four". Thanet shows a respectable annual fall of 5.1% in visitors registering at the Job Centre, but remains at the head of the list as having the highest number of unemployed of any district in Kent. With one ward in Thanet nearly reaching 14% and wards in Dover more than double the Kent average, there is an overwhelming case for the East Kent coastal business community to have its own voice in any new arrangements to replace SEEDA as the government's instrument of economic policy in the South East. The members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and the Dover District Chambers of Commerce, the two largest private sector representative bodies in the area, will be following developments closely.

	August 2010		Change since August 2009	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Ashford	1,745	2.5%	-203	-10.4%
Canterbury	2,077	2.1%	-307	-12.9%
Dover	2,005	3.1%	-175	-8.0%
Maidstone	2,157	2.3%	-308	-12.5%
Sevenoaks	1,178	1.7%	-280	-19.2%
Shepway	2,413	4.0%	-9	-0.4%
Thanet	3,923	5.0%	-213	-5.1%
Tonbridge & Malling	1,418	1.9%	-238	-14.4%
Tunbridge Wells	1,176	1.8%	-247	-17.4%
Thanet	3,923	5.0%	-213	-5.1%
Kent	31,494	3.0%	-3,487	-10.0%
South East	132,198	2.4%	-24,427	-15.6%

#### 4. Golf Means Business

East Kent's premier and richest corporate Golf Tournament is scheduled to take place at the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Organised by the Dover, Thanet & East Kent Chambers of Commerce, the tournament's prizes include a new car and generous sponsorship from different sectors of the East Kent coastal business community. Among the expanding list of supporters this year is Norfolk Line. An international flavour is guaranteed with the participation of a team from Golf en Côte d'Opale. Business cards are likely to be exchanged among some of the most enterprising companies in the South East including AEI Compounds, Amdell Ltd, Avia Services, Bradstowe Chartered Surveyors, Country Carpets, Hartman Marine Services, M&S Group, OFP Ltd, R K Group, Rail Civils & Construction Ltd, Ripplevale School, Smye-Rumsby, TCB Property Maintenance, The Prince Albert, Walpole Bay Hotel and The Weights Room. Distinguished guests will mingle with the players for the presentations at this highly ranked club much admired by golfing greats such as Jack Nicklaus and Bobby Locke. Official disdain and a 9 iron await anyone appearing in the club house wearing shorts.

#### 5. Windfarm News

The launch of Thanet Offshore Windfarm on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010 was witnessed by a quite a few members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber who had supplied Vattenfall, the Swedish energy giant which masterminded the project. We are grateful for one sharp-eyed observer who noted: "In the press pack given to all the dignitaries and distinguished guests in attendance at the opening of the world largest offshore windfarm was a souvenir book showing the highlights of the two years of construction of this £800 million project. On the page Local Links there is a photograph of one of your Chamber's networking breakfast with the accompanying text: 'The top photo on this page shows a meeting with the Thanet & East Kent Chamber of Commerce.' Does this mean that some of your members got in first?". The answer is of course "Yes, indeed". Furthermore, if you have read the first item of this edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider Chamber you will understand some of the advantages of belonging to the area's largest business support organisation. For details of membership, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk). It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.

#### 6. News From Dover: PPOD & Channel Swimming

We have learned that an alternative to the Dover Harbour Board's proposals for the future of the port of Dover is being formulated by a group called PPOD, which stands for the People's Port of Dover. The steering committee has stated that it has David Cameron's Big Society policy firmly in mind. PPOD has received support from all parts of the political spectrum, inspired at heart by the desire to maximise the benefit for the local economy of any change of structure in the Port of Dover from its current Trust Port status. The publicly owned Ports of Ramsgate and Whitstable will doubtlessly be following developments with a close interest. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber has partnered with our associates at the Dover District Chamber of Commerce on an Economic Impact Study of Channel Swimming. More celebrated overseas than at home, Channel Swimming has increased recently with large relay teams supplementing the individual efforts of the past. The research to date indicates that coastal businesses from Folkestone to Thanet benefit

significantly from the Channel Swimming sector. Initial results suggest an annual turnover of over £2 million. The Thanet & East Kent Insider will keep readers informed of the results of the study when it is completed.

## **7. Bicester Village Looks at Thanet**

As mentioned in previous editions, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be hosting a visitor from Value Retail Ltd during the coming week. This company owns high-end outlet shopping villages that produce the highest sales densities in the world. Business is booming “in sharp contrast to High Street retailers”, see

<http://www.executiveinterviews.net/players/mini/default.asp?order=UK03809>.

Group sales show a year-on-year increase of 25%. This is not the case in Margate which has the highest percentage of empty shops in the UK. Value Retail’s premises are strategically sited within easy travelling distance of population centres; Brussels, Cologne/Frankfurt, Munich, Paris, Milan/Bologna, Barcelona, Madrid and of course, London. With nearly half the customers from overseas, Value Retail outlets represent destination shopping at its best and provide the perfect complement to traditional tourism venues. The new high-speed rail link from East Kent to St Pancras is creating a rethink among potential inward investors. As with the pioneering Thanet College initiative, members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be at the front of the queue.

## **8. All Men Are Equal**

But a lot of others are now deemed to be equal as well. From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, the revisions to the Employment Equality Act came into force. To avoid expensive litigation, employers need to be aware of changes in the law regarding their behaviour towards employees and the behaviour that they allow on their premises. There may be a need to review contracts, works manuals and company policies. For a summary of the changes see,

<http://online.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/ruDetail?type=REGUPDATE&itemId=1085970385&site=210&r.s=e&r.lc=en&r.i=1075320304&r.t=ONEOFFPAGE>

## **9. Beware Of Carpet Woman**

We are grateful to Oliver Jewell of Kent Trading Standards who has issued an official warning about a female sales person who visits the private residences of elderly people in Kent and forces her way into their homes with the excuse of selling a rolled-up carpet. Kent Trading Standards has much sound advice on what to do in such circumstances and welcomes enquiries from consumers and companies alike. For details, telephone 01233 652385. Our advice is beware of Carpet Woman and don’t buy a carpet from a door-to-door sales person unless it is clearly and unambiguously flying.

## **10. Twitter Ye Not**

If Frankie Howard were alive today, he might well be tempted to adopt the catchphrase, “Twitter Ye Not” and it would be good advice to professional sports people the world over. Ryder Cup golfers in the GB and Europe team have been instructed not to twitter during the course of the tournament against the USA this weekend at the Celtic Manor Resort in Wales. The GB golfing authorities are aware of the problems caused in other disciplines through the injudicious use of social networking sites and have wisely decided to remove the risk from players who might be tempted to vent their frustrations with a wayward driver on the more amendable keyboard at their hotel. One of the great sporting success stories of the past decade is the Indian Premier League which has revitalised interest in leather on willow and has produced huge wealth for its organisers. The driving force behind the IPL was its chairman, Lalit Modi. Sadly, he is now longer Chairman and has been stripped of his position as vice-president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. Now Mr Modi is more likely to be Mr Moody and less likely to be a guest at cocktail parties in the diplomatic quarter of New Delhi. What is it that has sparked such a dramatic fall from grace? The answer is Twitter. In a classic Cherchez La Femme drama, Lalit Modi announced on Twitter the ownership details of a new franchise set to join the IPL in 2011 and thereby laid a trail that led to the girlfriend of a foreign minister, Shashi Tharoor. The subsequent investigations have seen one of the most powerful men in world cricket facing multiple charges and a severe decrease in the number of cocktail cherries he can expect to consume in the near future. If you are the type of person who does not find that, as Roger McGough put it; “Discretion is the best part of Valerie”, our advice to you is “Twitter Ye Not”.

## 11. Our Sponsors

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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

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