

# **Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber**

## **Thanet & East Kent Insider**

**8<sup>th</sup> January 2011      Issue No.: 138**

### **1. Manston Parkway Station**

Local companies will be happy to learn that moves are afoot to bring forward the plans to build a railway station at Manston Airport to provide a faster link to London. As reported in the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 6<sup>th</sup> November and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and in KoS Media's Your Thanet article of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010, this chamber was kindly invited to meet Rt Hon Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Transport. At the time, it was not envisaged that a dedicated railway station at Manston could be constructed for "at least 4 years". With signs of a recovering economy, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber has joined our associates at the Dover District Chamber of Commerce in pressing for an early start to this initiative. With the promise of 1,000 jobs for every 1 million passenger movements, the development of Manston offers one of the best opportunities to reduce Thanet's huge benefits bill which currently stands at £180 million per year. We share the concerns of our elected representatives in all parties and at every level of government that environmental considerations should not be ignored, but we also remember that that the American aircraft at the airport in the 1950s were not noted for their quiet engines. The US 406th Fighter-Bomber Wing stationed at Manston loved its F-84 Thunderjets; local librarians less so. The Bombardier Q400 aircraft that now provide the daily flights to Edinburgh and Manchester are described by their manufacturer as "the quietest turboprops flying today"; Q stands for Quiet. The American airmen who helped to safeguard our shores in the cold war were not particularly concerned with low noise operations. They were more focused on reaching any one of the 20,000 locations in the Soviet Union that President Eisenhower's administration had identified as potential targets. East Kent residents must feel much safer now living conveniently close to an airport hub, so useful for your holidays and business trips, rather than living next to a launch pad for Moscow bombing missions. Makes you think, doesn't it?

### **2. Home Workers Beware**

We are grateful to Marion Ward, Advice and Education Manager at Trading Standards Kent for advising us on the perils of getting involved with some home working schemes that are fronts for illegal money lending or 'loan sharking'. The victims are charged a registration fee or invited to take out a loan instead of paid work. We have learned that in September 2010, a pregnant woman was prosecuted for carrying out a spate of burglaries. Her defence was that she was obliged to pay a loan shark. She had answered an advert offering the chance to earn extra money but had been offered a loan instead. She was not able to maintain the repayments. Trading Standards welcome information from anyone who has been approached about any similar schemes or has seen any advertising for the same. You are invited to telephone Consumer Direct, tel: 08454 04 05 06.

### **3. Tourism & Transport**

Images from the Tourism & Transport Business Networking Breakfast of last month are available for viewing and purchase from our official photographer, see <http://www.photoboxgallery.com/DDCC>. Please note that the web address is case sensitive. Photographs can be ordered from as little as 5p per copy. There are also

opportunities to have your favourite images printed in a variety of formats for corporate gifts including greetings cards, mugs and t-shirts. Members who attended the Chamber Golf Day at the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club also feature on the website together with a selection of images from other events.

#### 4. Transport & Tourism Follow Up

The Chamber Transport Advisory Group is expecting to hold its first meeting in late February 2011. If you any advice or recommendations, please address them by email to [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk). Full details of Kent County Council's transport 20 year plan to ease congestion can be found at <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/News/growth-without-gridlock.pdf>. Early versions of this document listed referred to "lorry road user charging"; the text should have read "foreign lorry road user charging". This relates to the proposals to institute a tax disc for foreign lorries called a "vignette", as described in the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010 under the headline "3. Who Pays?". An executive summary of KCC's Growth Without Gridlock is available at <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/News/growth-without-gridlock-summary.pdf>. Be warned that this document leans more on the 'executive' than the 'summary' as any reader ploughing through the 40 pages will discover. You will be pleased to know that there are lots of pictures and diagrams to keep you amused.

#### 5. Energy Costs Shock Horror

We are grateful to Martyn Young of Atlantic Business Resources, tel: 0781 353 7456, for bringing our attention to the E.ON Market Report of January 2011 which gives a detailed breakdown of the gas, oil, coal and carbon markets for the period December 2009 to December 2010. Some of the monthly figures quoted are alarming, such as the 6% increase in oil prices during last month alone. Monthly fluctuations may normally be of interest to speculators more than the rest of us who have longer term trends in mind, but when the pace of rises is increasing so sharply, it suggests that anyone who does not review their energy costs now might have serious cause to regret it in the near future. As Martyn put it in an email to the Thanet & East Kent Chamber: "This must be hurting a lot of businesses who are on spot rates". Indeed, the annual and monthly figures give rise to serious concerns for any UK business with a high dependency on power.

#### 6. Enough Comment, Give Us The Facts

Here are the figures E.ON gives for the annual change from December 2009 to December 2010 together with the monthly change from the beginning to the end of last month.

Supply	Year Dec 2009 – Dec 2010	Month Dec 2010
Average front month power contract price	32% higher	7% higher
Average front month gas contract price	43% higher	8% higher
Average front month oil contract price	18% higher	6% higher
Average Apr'11 Annualised power price	9% higher	6% higher
Average Apr'11 Annualised power price	15% higher	8% higher

#### 7. Help! What Can I Do?

If you have not reviewed your energy costs in the last year, it might be wise to do this without delay. Professional cost management experts are usually able to find you the biggest discounts at no cost to your business. The following Chamber members are recommended: Martyn Young of Atlantic Business Resources tel: 0781 353 7456; David Batten of Auditel (UK) Ltd tel: 07973 469411; Jeremy Bailey of Auditel tel: 01843 588 776.

## **8. Why Have Energy Costs Risen So Much?**

Record gas prices were a result of increased demand due to the freezing weather in December 2010. Coupled with low gas storage levels, the greater demand for generation led to higher coal and gas prices. Thus, annual electricity contracts became much more expensive. Oil prices in December suffered from sharply increased demand in the US and Europe leading to a peak of 90 USD/bbl for the first time since October 2008. Demand from Asia for Australian coal had declined at the end of November but supply problems pushed up these prices as well.

## **9. What's All This About Carbon Then?**

E.ON informs us that Carbon Permits have become an increasingly important driver for the UK power prices "as more than 70% of UK power stations use coal or gas." Since burning gas and coal produces harmful emissions, higher generation means higher carbon costs or as E.ON puts it: "The cost of 'clean power' also takes into account the cost of carbon permits traded under the EU scheme". When you get your next utility bill, you might like to bear this in mind as your hair goes vertical and your face a bright purple.

## **10. Petrol Prices Bring More Shock Horror**

Established Chamber members will recall the Broadstairs Petrol Index that the Thanet & East Kent Insider instituted in 2008 following a series of sharp rises in prices at the fuel pump. The Chamber BPI received coverage in local newspapers which shared our alarm at the Thanet Surcharge; the difference in price between a litre of unleaded in Thanet as opposed to Canterbury. We now look again at the BPI and the increase in motoring costs in the past twelve months. On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010, the cheapest litre of unleaded petrol available within 5 miles of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber office in Broadstairs cost 82.9p. One year later on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the cheapest available costs 124.8p; a rise of just over 50%. To put it another way, the cheapest gallon of petrol now costs £5.67. Has your revenue increased by over half?

## **11. News From Dover**

Dieter Jaenicke, the Chairman and founder of Viking Recruitment, has been awarded the prestigious Merchant Navy Medal for services to merchant shipping and his work with British officer cadets. Following an investiture ceremony at Trinity House, Dieter now joins the ranks of hero seafarers such as Captain Peter Stapleton, who fought off Somali pirates in MV Boularibank in 2008, and Commodore Ronald Warwick, the former Master of Queen Mary 2. We offer our sincere congratulations to Dieter in the knowledge the East Kent coastal business community takes pride in his success. A new hotel is due to open on Dover Sea Front next month. To be known as the Best Western Marina Hotel and Spa, it will operate in the refurbished premises of the former Churchill Hotel. A new fitness centre and sauna are expected to be popular with residents and guests. As part of the same group that operates the Dover Ramada Hotel at Whitfield, the management will be looking to attract more holiday makers and cross-channel travellers of all descriptions. A recent economic impact study by the Dover District Chamber of Commerce showed that Channel Swimming contributes over £3 million pounds to the local economy with most of it centred on the port. Angie Wiggins, Manager of Dover Counselling Centre, thanks members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber for the £276 raised at our annual Thanet v Dover Golf Day at the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club. DCC was established following the sinking of the Herald Free Enterprise ferry which claimed 193 lives on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1987. It is a registered charity that offers professional and confidential counselling to East Kent residents and workers and is still ministering to some of the families who lost loved ones on that fateful day.

## **12. Dedicated Followers Of Cricket**

If you are one of those people who agree with George Bernard Shaw that “The English are not very spiritual people, so they invented cricket to give them some idea of eternity” then you may be less enthused than most by England’s recent Ashes victory in Australia; our first away series triumph down under for 24 years. Radio listeners to cricket have long been thoroughly entertained by the BBC’s Test Match Special team, although the schoolboy humour has often been inadvertent. This was probably the case with the incomparable Brian Johnston’s famous remark during England’s game against the West Indies: “The bowler’s Holding; the batsmen’s Willey”. Somehow, Michael Holding and Peter Willey were never quite the same players again. But to understand the full measure of dedication and pathos that cricket inspires, we turn to one Chamber member who relates the following account from his days as a club cricketer in the East Kent league. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to readers to judge for themselves. “It took place in the third over of a Saturday match when we were playing the village side at Lyminge. I was halfway through my run up when their opening batsmen suddenly moved away from the wicket, took off his cap and stood with his head bowed. We then noticed a funeral cortege moving slowly along the road alongside the boundary at the end of the ground. We all removed our caps and stood still in respectful silence until it had passed. Echoing the thoughts of our entire fielding side, I couldn’t help saying to the batsman: ‘That was a kind gesture. Thank you for bringing it to our attention’. He replied: ‘Think nothing of it. It was the least I could do. After all, we were married for thirty-one years’”.

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***It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.***  
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Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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