

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

26<sup>th</sup> February 2011 Issue No.: 145

### 1. Manston Airport

Last week, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber was invited to a meeting with senior staff from Flybe to discuss the local economy and the airline's plans for expansion. There is no doubt that the daily flights to Edinburgh introduced last year have been a great success with bookings exceeding expectations. The addition of Manchester last September increased the attraction of the airport as a departure point for businesses in the South East seeking to increase sales in the North West region. Having seen the sales figures, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber can understand why Flybe is seeking to build on its success by offering more routes from Manston with connections for international flights. As mentioned in the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2011, one of the keys to growth is matching the travel wishes of residents and workers with the dates, times and destinations available. With this in mind, Flybe offered readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider the opportunity to state their preferences. If you have not already completed the on-line survey, please do so now. It takes just a few minutes. If you do not, then you can hardly complain if any new low cost flights from Manston go to Alicante, Belfast and Newquay rather than to Lyon near your posh brother's place with its extensive cellar and swimming pool or to Faro where your neighbour has offered you the free use of his holiday villa. This is your opportunity to tell the airline where to go. The survey can be found at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/MSEchamber](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MSEchamber)

### 2. Business Networking Breakfast

Places are still available for the Life After Pfizer Business Networking Breakfast on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March in Sandwich. Speakers include the leading light behind the proposed Manston Parkway Station. Booking is essential. To reserve your place, email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Life After Pfizer Breakfast". Tickets cost £12 for Chamber members and £16 for non-members.

### 3. Leadership Grant

Grants of £500 are available for Owner Manager and Directors interested in improving their skills on approved courses. Nearly, 7,000 business owners in the South East have benefited from the funding since its launch in April 2009. A further £500 can be claimed if matched by the company. The grant is subject to some terms and conditions, but the initiative is worth investigating if you would like to improve your leadership skills. Among the most popular selections to date are General Management, Planning, Budgeting and Marketing. For more information, email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "TEKC Leadership & Management Grant".

### 4. A Greener Economy

Augustine House in Canterbury was the venue for a conference and exhibition last Wednesday organised by our good friends at Canterbury4Business. Skilfully chaired with good humour by Clive Relf of Reeves & Co LLP under the title "A Greener Economy: Time for Change?", the morning brought together expert speakers who outlined their views of a sustainable economy where green issues were at the top of the agenda. John Atkins, of CE Murch, scorned the use of PowerPoint but gave a fascinating account of how he converted from conventional farming to being a producer of woodchips for use as biomass in commercial boilers. The resulting Combined Heat and

Power systems have been adopted by Amery Court and Canterbury City Council. Keith Gwilym of Canterbury Christ Church University explained some of the principles that guided the university's construction of Augustine House on the site of the former Clarkson Insurance premises in Canterbury. Geo-thermal power supplies 25% of the heating and cooling needs of the building. In brief, this system is based on piles driven deep into the ground that have a constant temperature at their base, let's call this 'C Temp'. When the building is hotter than C Temp the heat is transferred below which thus cools the building. When the building is colder than C Temp, the reverse occurs. Clever stuff. The presentation from David Reed of Canterbury City Council showed why he has a first class degree from the University of London; delegates knew that already as it was printed in the programme. Adam Lacey of Streetcar said that his company runs a successful scheme for short term car hire that reduces pollution, costs and congestion. The minimum car hire period is just 30 minutes. Streetcar has been particularly successful in London and Cambridge and now has two sites in Kent, both in Maidstone. Green credentials feature strongly in the company's publicity which states: "Every Streetcar on the road replaces, on average, 26 privately-owned cars." Vattenfall's Project Director, Goram Loman, gave an elegant and concise account of the environmental and engineering qualities of his company's installations at Thanet Offshore Windfarm and at Kentish Flats. He outlined the plans to add to the 30 turbines off the coast of Whitstable which together with the 100 turbines now off the coast of Ramsgate make a major contribution to the government's target of 15% of UK electricity to be generated from renewable sources by the year 2015.

## **5. Financing The Future**

We are grateful to Marie Hamm of East Kent LSP for sending details of a social enterprise event entitled Financing A Sustainable Future to be held at The Pines Calyx at St Margaret's Bay on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011 from 1000 hrs to 1600 hrs. The sessions will focus on the current and future financing models available to companies. Speakers will include representatives from Big Invest, the Charity Bank and the Community Development Finance Association. Tickets at £25 each and further details are available from Marie Hamm by email to [marie@eastkent.sp.org.uk](mailto:marie@eastkent.sp.org.uk).

## **6. Opportunities**

In the last few weeks, the Thanet & East Kent Insider has brought to the attention of Chamber members the opportunities to open a UK Sales Office for a Finnish manufacturer and to supply a 6MW power station for export to Africa. This week we highlight investment opportunities in a hi-tech software company with a unique product for Tour Operator Reservations and a Thanet-based company specialising in complementary research and medicines looking for sales agents in the UK, USA, India, Canada, Spain, China and Singapore. Any enquiries should be addressed to [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with a short explanation of your interest.

## **7. Fair Fuel**

Roger Gale, Member of Parliament for Thanet North, is one of a growing number of MPs to be listed as supporting the campaign for fairer fuel prices. Regular readers of the Insider know that the Thanet & East Kent Insider has long campaigned to end the Thanet Surcharge of at least 3p on a litre of unleaded petrol which residents and workers in Thanet are obliged to pay and their counterparts in Canterbury do not. The additional surcharge on petrol is an unfair cost that cannot be justified. The current petition at [www.fairfueluk.com](http://www.fairfueluk.com) is targeted at raising support at Westminster for the planned April fuel duty increase of up to 5p a litre to be scrapped.

## **8. Inflation**

The Office of National Statistics has revealed that Consumer Price Index for annual inflation rose from 3.7% in December 2010 to 4.0% in January 2011. Fuels and lubricants are listed in the official report as being a major

source of the rise due to “increases in VAT, fuel duty and in the price of crude oil all contributed to prices increasing between December 2010 and January 2011 by more than between the same two months a year ago. The price of petrol stood at £1.27 per litre in January 2011, a record high”. Not all prices rose. Consumers benefited from lower prices on CDs and DVDs. Reduced overdraft charges from many banks and building societies also provided some mitigation. Sadly, pubs, clubs and restaurants, a significant sector in the East Kent coastal business community, suffered a record monthly price increase of 1.4%. Alcoholic beverages sales were also hit by the VAT increase leading to another record monthly price rise of 6.7%, whisky and vodka suffering particularly badly.

## **9. Greek Night In Margate**

Cheryl Ezekiel of Thanet District Council has kindly informed the Thanet & East Kent Insider of a Charity Greek Night scheduled for the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at the Greek Taverna in aid of the Mayor’s Fund. Tickets priced at a modest £12 are available from Cheryl by telephone to 01843 221704 or by email to [cheryl@margate.org.uk](mailto:cheryl@margate.org.uk).

## **10. News From Dover**

A town meeting has been called at Dover Town Hall on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 at 1800 hrs. The supporters of Dover People’s Port Trust Limited (DPPTL) will present their case to the people of Dover as to why the citizens of the town should back DPPTL’s current offer made to the government to purchase the port of Dover. A referendum will follow later in the month at which Dover residents will be invited to back or reject the proposal. A partnership is promised between the town, port and ferry companies resulting in an immediate £50 million being available for regeneration and investment in Dover.

## **11. The Things They Say**

Footballers are not renowned for their fluency or philosophical insights. Nevertheless, a few managers have distinguished themselves with illuminating comments on the human condition. The pages of the Thanet & East Kent Insider have featured in the past contributions from Brian Clough, Bill Shankly and others. The Insider’s most closely monitored team, Doncaster Rovers, does not have an entry in the Oxford Book of Quotations, although its current manager, Sean O’Driscoll, got half way there when lamenting another loss. He said in a post match interview: “I’d go home and kick the cat if I could – but I haven’t got one”. He may not always choose the best tactics, but you cannot fault the logic. Grim reality is the cause of some pithy statements such as that of Paul Jewell, another lamenting manager: “Up front we played like world beaters, - at the back it was more like panel beaters”. Sometimes the basic instinct of British managers to ‘cut out the fancy stuff and just kick the ball or the man as hard as you can’ surfaces in their criticism of foreign players. George Graham, hard talking, tough-guy manager from Bargeddie in North Lanarkshire was not overly impressed by the Swedish player Tomas Brodin whom he found on the club’s payroll when he arrived as manager at Leeds United. This is a club whose fans had been treated to the simple approach of Norman Hunter and others of “Get your retaliation in first”. It was no surprise when George Graham said of Brodin: “I can’t imagine him jumping for the ball. One of his false eyelashes might come out”. But perhaps we should leave the last word to one of the greatest managers of British football, Bill Shankly. When he was having his hair cut in his beloved Liverpool and the barber asked; “Anything off the top, sir?”, he replied simply: “Yes, Everton.”.

## **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](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk)**

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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