

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2011      Issue No.: 146**

### **1. Final Call For Breakfast**

This is the final call for the “Life After Pfizer” business networking breakfast in Sandwich scheduled for 0730 hrs on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Leading the speakers will be Laura Sandys MP who is heading the government’s response to the closure of Pfizer. She will be joined by senior business figures who will outline the opportunities for growth in the Thanet and Dover Districts in a post Pfizer era. Booking is essential. Tickets cost £12 for Chamber members and £16 for non members. To reserve your place, email [manager@tekc.c.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.c.uk) with the subject line “Life After Pfizer Breakfast”. Booking closes at 1200 hrs on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011. ,

### **2. Game For A Laugh In Thanet**

G Casino will be the venue for a Comedy Night on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011. Located at Westwood Cross, G Casino offers discerning drinkers and diners a convivial atmosphere at the heart of Westwood Cross CT10 2BF making a convenient location with ample parking available for any late-night shoppers. Customers are promised four top comedians and a free drink for an entrance price of just £9.95. As with most events at licensed gambling establishments, entrants must be 18 years or older and, if not a casino member, should bring a photo ID such as a driving licence or passport. For more details, telephone 01843 579999 or ask at reception.

### **3. Warming Up In Scandinavia**

Following a recent meeting with the UK’s Ambassador for Finland, the Chamber is developing warm relations with Scandinavian trading partners. Any company wishing to discuss recruitment issues with some of Northern Europe’s richest countries might find it useful to attend an event scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 from 1730 hrs to 2130 hrs at the Blu Portman Hotel, 22 Portman Square, W1H 7BG, London. Entitled the Annual Nordic Career Forum, it is aimed at promoting recruitment contacts and will be of interest to employment agencies and human resource professionals. Export companies wishing to raise their profile in Finland, Denmark or Norway might like to consider attending a networking evening at the luxury hotel Grange St Paul’s located in the heart of the City’s financial district. Starting at 1800 hrs on Thursday 31 March 2011, the event will last around two hours. The Finnish-British Chamber of Commerce (FBCC) welcomes enquiries from members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber who may contact FBCC direct by email to [events@fbcc.co.uk](mailto:events@fbcc.co.uk) for details quoting their Thanet & East Kent Chamber membership number. If you do not have your membership certificate to hand, email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) or telephone 01843 609289.

## **4. Pubs And Beer**

The Chamber has been asked to comment on the Kent Alcohol Strategy 2010 - 2013 and its application to young people in the area. We support the objectives of the Kent Alcohol Strategy to “inform and prevent harm through a range of measures and opportunities that addresses prevention through education and information, access to treatment when necessary and work with the retail industry to ensure responsible sales”. Pubs are an important feature of the landscape in East Kent. Community centres in our villages and employment hubs throughout our coastal business community, our pubs attract tourists and keep many small companies nourished with regular purchases from local suppliers. In the past, we have drawn a sharp distinction between the few problems occasioned from drinking on licensed premises under the watchful eyes of responsible landlords and the increasingly worrying incidents that follow from the plentiful provision of cheap drinks with a high alcohol content that are available from national chains. We learn from a report by Oxford Economics of February 2011, Local Impact of the Beer & Pub Sector, that “983,000 jobs are sustained or created through the activity of the beer & pub sector in the UK”. Thanet North MP, Roger Gale, is a long-standing supporter of reforms to the legislative and taxation burdens on our pubs and our local pubs.

## **5. Why Are Our Pubs Back On The Agenda?**

The Rugby World Cup, the imminent Royal Wedding and next year’s London Olympics are all large scale events which many people will doubtlessly wish to enjoy in the company of their friends and family at a local hostelry. There is some concern among the licensed trade in East Kent that the proposals for a council to impose an Early Morning Restriction Order (EMRO) on pubs or on a particular street could force some of them to close early or to close for good without sufficient reason or appropriate redress. There is a risk that even a Temporary Event Notice would be overruled by an EMRO and thus penalise the well run pubs because of the misbehaviour from those that are not so well managed. The imposition of a late night levy could have a similar effect by driving potential customers away from established operators. Any increase in underage drinking from illicit purchases from chain stores would be a further blow to the on-trade which has suffered badly in recent years from successive increases in duties and taxation. For a copy of last month’s 30-page report on UK pubs by the much respected Oxford Economics, Chamber members are invited to email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line “Oxford Pub Report”.

## **6. What’s The Latest News About Dover Harbour?**

An historic event took place at Dover Town Hall on the evening of Thursday, 3rd March 2011. For the first time in the town’s long history, a public meeting was called to decide on a parish referendum on the future of the Port of Dover. Under the firm but fair chairmanship of the Town Mayor, Cllr Sue Jones, speakers on behalf of the Dover People’s Port Trust Limited (DPPTL) outlined their vision of the future to the audience of around 700 concerned locals. On the panel were Neil Wiggins, Chairman of DPPTL, Nick Carmichael of Evolution Securities, Lord Maurice Glassman, Labour peer, and David Foley, Chief Executive of the Chamber and a Director of DPPTL. Neil Wiggins outlined his own background in Dover and the maritime industries. He explained that the

alternatives to the mutualisation proposed by DPPTL would not be in the best interests of the town. He said that it was unlikely that the current trust port status of DHB would continue and that unless prompt action is taken, the port would sooner or later be privatised with a sale to remote overseas owners who might not have the benefits to local people uppermost in their minds. Nick Carmichael summarised the technical financial details of the offer made to the government and explained how the £200 million raised represented a firm and reasonable sum for the Treasury as an appropriate multiple of the port's EBITDA, (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization). Lord Glassman expressed his whole-hearted enthusiasm for the project. He emphasised his local connections in East Kent and backed the people of Dover to take charge of their own future. He continued that there was widespread backing among his party colleagues and that he and the Conservative MP for Dover were of one mind on the future of the port. David Foley emphasized the benefits to regeneration across the East Kent business community that would flow from the £50 million that would immediately be available to DPPTL. He noted that the recent revolt in North Africa stems from ordinary people feeling remote from the decision-making processes of unelected regimes. Here was an opportunity for local people to have say in their own future. He urged everyone in the audience to take an interest in the port and for those eligible to vote to do so. The motion was passed and a referendum will be duly held within 25 days.

## **7. Does Everyone Agree On The Future Of Dover??**

No, they do not. ITV Meridian News broadcast a summary of the arguments for and against; click on <http://www.itv.com/meridian-east/a-peoples-port06302/>. The current management of Dover Harbour Board is firmly against the proposals from DPPTL which it has branded as “unrealistic and undeliverable”. As the DPPTL proposals edge ever closer to realisation and delivery, it will be interesting to witness the pronouncements of senior staff who might begin to contemplate their own futures under a new regime and to consider to what extent their promotion prospects might be compromised if they condemn their potential future bosses too loudly in public. The Ports of Ramsgate and Whitstable have been watching developments closely but quietly.

## **8. At Your Service, My Lord**

These pages have often discoursed on the simple virtues behind good business practice; attention to price, quality and service with the occasional lament that good service is usually the cheapest to provide and the rarest to find. It is with great pleasure that we report the following account from a Chamber member who shares our belief that great service is one of the keys to successful retailing. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to readers to judge for themselves. “This happened a few weeks ago in that big store near the seafront. A rather smartly dressed senior citizen went up to a young assistant holding a cabbage and said: “Excuse me young man. I would rather like to purchase half a cabbage. Is it alright to cut this one in two?” Somewhat taken aback by this unusual request, the young apprentice said: “Just a moment sir, I’ll ask the manager.” He then went to the back of the store. Spying the manager near the office door, he went up to him and said: “There’s a blithering idiot near the entrance who wants to buy half a cabbage.” As he finished the last word, he received a tap on his shoulder and turned around to find himself staring straight into the eyes of the customer in question. Quick as a flash and

without repetition, hesitation or deviation, he added: "And this gentleman here has kindly agreed to buy the other half". To beaming smiles all round, they then proceeded to the check out and completed the transaction. A few minutes later, the manager called the young assistant aside and said:"I can see what happened there. That was some quick thinking on your part, well done. You probably didn't know it, but that last customer was a peer of the realm." Unable to recall the assistant's name, the manager continued: "You might have a future here. There's always room in my store for an ambitious young chap with the right credentials. Tell me, you are not from East Kent, are you. What brings you down here?" The bright spark replied: "No, I'm new. I'm from Liverpool, but I left as soon as I could. There's nothing there but talented footballers and loose women." The manager scowled and said: "I'll have you know, my wife comes from Liverpool." Undaunted, the assistant continued: "Oh really sir, which team did she play for?" This lad will go far.

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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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