



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

### **Thanet & East Kent Insider**

**15<sup>th</sup> October 2011    Issue No.: 172**

#### **1. Golf & Business**

The Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club was again the host for East Kent's largest corporate Golf Tournament which matched the Dover District Chamber of Commerce against its traditional rival, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber. In the magnificent setting of the Deal course, Chamber members followed in the footsteps of some of the sport's greatest ever players as they trod the fairways previously graced by Jack Nicklaus, Harry Vardon and the players in two previous Open Championships. Chief executives, directors and senior managers from some of East Kent's most successful companies showed themselves at their competitive best; fighting any hostile natural elements with honest individual endeavour and an excellent team spirit. Anyone who thinks that golf has no parallels at all with the commercial world should try their hand at playing on a links course. Managing repeated downturns, unpredictable fluctuations and the occasional merriment of your competitors is all part of process of completing the 18 holes. Thanks to our brilliant photographer, Rosie Anton, the day is chartered from early morning to the final presentations in the 656 images to be found on the Chamber's Official Image website at <http://www.photoboxgallery.com/DDCC>.

#### **2. Sponsors for 2011**

The major sponsors this year were DFDS Seaways, the innovative former Norfolk line, see [www.dfds.com](http://www.dfds.com), which operates the Dover to Dunkirk ferry service; Renault specialists DP Lead & Sons, which is offering the new Clio Pzaz for under £8,000 tel: 01304 824155, and OFP Timber Framed Homes, a local company that will design and build your house, office or school tel: 01304 613298. Financial support for 2011 reached an all-time high reflecting the growing marketing value and prestige of this tournament to the East Kent coastal business community. Other successful companies pleased to the sponsor the day included Accommodation Shop tel: 01304 226666, Go Kart tel: Tel: 01227 712288, Golf Stream 01227 713173, Andrew Reynolds Pro tel: 01304 374170, American Golf, Sharp Printing Services tel: 01843 600123, Walpole Bay Hotel tel: 01843 221703, Carol Peters Coach Travel tel: 01843 01843 591007, Online Mike Beer Transport tel: 01304 828600, Sota Solutions 0800 072 2420 and Coastal Data Systems tel: 01843 82 33 24.

#### **3. Who Won?**

It is tempting to state that everyone in the club house or on the course was a winner as the recession was forgotten and the splendid welcome and hospitality of the club was thoroughly enjoyed. But, just as in this month's Rugby World Cup, there were some worthy winners and some unfortunate losers. That pesky little white ball did not always travel where the course designers had intended; the club house itself proving to be too tempting a target for one enthusiastic golfer on the very first tee. The

Chamber of Commerce Challenge Cup was won by Dover for the first time in seven years, aided by a strong team from DFDS Seaways and some wise management by team captain Ted Lamb of Country Carpets. The Corporate Team Championship saw a close encounter with the Walpole Bay Hotel claiming third place, just behind Country Carpets; but, they both had to acknowledge the eventual winners DFDS Seaways A. The Individual Championship was keenly contested. Russell McKelvey won the trophy but was made to battle hard to draw away from Durham Lamb, Jeff Darroway, Jonathan Smith and Alastair Narraway. Durham Lamb may have needed a golf buggy all on his own to carry away a rich prize haul of trophies, champagne, golf balls, certificates and golf equipment as he came second in the Nearest The Pin Challenge and won the Longest Drive Competition and the prestigious Ray Haines Memorial Trophy, named after the late Chief Executive of Dover District Chamber of Commerce who will be remembered by many among the area's golfing fraternity. Jonathan Page and Bradley Ellison were just pipped in the Longest Drive. Justin Bishop showed his class as an ex-professional by getting his ball nearer to the pin than anyone else. Tony Marsh, who came third, must be an each way bet for next year.

#### **4. Confidence in East Kent**

Despite difficult trading conditions during the past twelve months, the Chamber Golf Tournament brought together some of East Kent's most successful companies, proving that confidence in the local economy is growing. Chamber Chief Executive said: "We are grateful to all our sponsors, especially D. P. Lead & Sons, OFP Homes and DFDS Seaways, which have yet again shown their commitment to their local business community and have helped to make this tournament such a success". Chamber members raised £220 for their chosen charity, the Dover Counselling Centre which was established in the wake of the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster in 1987 and continues to offer free counselling services to those most in need. We leave the final word to DFDS's Bernard Disneur who wrote magnanimously: "I would like to thank you for organising such a splendid Golf Tournament, the venue, course, meals and company couldn't have been surpassed."

#### **5. Land Wanted**

We have been approached by an investor who is looking to buy a brownfield site where he can build a single large warehouse. The ideal position would be in or near Manston, the M20, M2 or a major road in Kent. If you can assist, please email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Brownfield Site 172" and we will make the necessary connections.

#### **6. News From Canterbury Christ Church University**

On 5th October 2011, Canterbury Christ Church University launched the England Centre for Practice Development. Under the direction of Professor Jan Dewing, Professor Kim Manley and Carolyn Jackson, this pioneering department will focus research on implementing best practice and improving patient care. The intention is to find what works best from anywhere in the world and to ensure that this informs the decision-makers in our hospitals, surgeries and medical centres. The emphasis is on procedures and practices that make a genuine difference to our lives. Present at the launch was the boss, the University Pro-Chancellor Peter Hermitage. He started his career as a humble constable and became a Chief Constable. Later, at the Home Office he had special responsibility for personnel issues and value for money. Later still, he headed the East Kent NHS Hospital Trust and served as Chairman of the Security Industry Association. This is a man who knows how to manage people and how to add value. As a football manager might say: "The boy done good". We just hope that a team in Greece or Italy does not seek his transfer because he is one of Thanet's own, an alumnus of Chatham House School, whose management expertise is required on his home patch.

#### **7. Investment Fund**

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is close to reaching an agreement on establishing an investment fund to which members can apply for development capital to boost their business. We expect to consider applications for sums of up to £100,000. All applicants must be based in East Kent. Further details will be forwarded to members in the next edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.

#### **8. Margate Shooter**

Some Chamber members have expressed surprise at a story that surfaced some 10 days ago about Margate Museum. It appears that a thief or thieves stole a decommissioned handgun from a display case. To make matters worse, the gun in question was a Webley Mk IV police revolver dating from the Second World War. What surprised our membership was the quote attributed to a PC Steve Hailey who allegedly said: "As a decommissioned gun this revolver poses no risk to anyone". It follows therefore that if you are going about your lawful business and find yourself faced with a thug with a Webley revolver, you should take careful note that the Mk IV differs from its predecessors in being made of higher quality steel and has a four inch barrel. The Webley Mk V barrel is 3mm wider and the Webley Mk VI has a barrel that is longer by two inches. Shopkeepers and the like may consider keeping a tape measure behind the counter just in case they need to make some rapid measurements, assuming of

course that the thug in question allows you to do so. If he refuses, you could always ask him in a casual manner if he has visited Margate Museum recently. If it turns out that the gun before you is a Webley Mk IV ex-police revolver, then PC Steve Hailey could well be right and it poses no threat to you, unless of course the thug hits you on the head with it. You didn't think of that, did you Steve? All of which proves that a good press officer can avoid such howlers. To find out how a Public Relations agency can help you, give Maxim a call, tel: 01892 513033.

## 9. Business Advice Clinics Report

Since last April, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber in liaison with our sister body in Dover has offered a free monthly Business Advice Clinic open to established companies, start-ups and any organisation trading in the Thanet or Dover Districts. This month has seen a wide variety of companies taking advantage of the expert guidance available, from multi-million pound firms looking to expand their export markets to a start up with 22 ideas for new products. Our panel is drawn from successful business people supplemented by professional lawyers and bankers who can all add value to the products and services described to them. Unlike television's Dragon's Den, our panelists are not looking to profit themselves or to court publicity. They are motivated by a desire to give something back to the local economy that has served them so well, Bookings can be made by telephone or email as follows: Broadstairs tel: 01843 609289 [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk); Dover tel: 01304 824955 email: [mail:doverchamber.co.uk](mailto:mail:doverchamber.co.uk).

## 10. How Are We Doing?

We are grateful to the Research & Information department of Kent County Council for supplying the latest unemployment data for Kent. Although the monthly fluctuations are of passing interest, as always it is the year-on-year changes that tell us more about job market trends. There is no disguising the fact that the figures for September 2011 do not compare favourably with the data from September 2010. The Kent district with the biggest increase in unemployment benefit claimants is Dover which shows a massive 25.2% rise in registered unemployed. Within the district, Walmer is particularly affected with a 46% increase in claimants. Anyone who has followed the news about the closure of Pfizer will not be surprised that Sandwich itself now has reduced its workforce by over 30% compared to twelve months previously. No district in Kent has escaped the decline, but Dartford 8.1%, Sevenoaks 7.3% and Tunbridge Wells 2.4% have at least outperformed the rate of decline in Great Britain which stands at 9.9%. Along with the interest rate, exchange rate and inflation rate, unemployment is one of the key economic indicators that measure our economy and inform us of our economic health. Here are the results for East Kent. The right hand column indicates the annual change in the number of registered unemployed.

	September 2011		Change since September 2010	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Thanet	4,587	5.8%	+660	+16.8%
Canterbury	2,352	2.3%	+257	+12.3%
Dover District	2,430	3.7%	+489	+25.2%
Gravesham	2,660	4.2%	+447	+20.2%
Maidstone	2,447	2.5%	281	+13.0%
Shepway	2,596	4.2%	267	+11.5%
Swale	3,266	3.9%	387	+13.4%
Kent	35,317	3.3%	+4,321	+13.9%
South East	140,405	2.6%	+9,863	+7.6%
Great Britain	1,517,197	3.9%	136,091	+9.9%

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## 11. Jobs Fair

Canterbury Christ Church University is hosting a Jobs Fair on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 at Augustine Hall, Canterbury from 1200 hrs to 1500 hrs. Among the exhibitors will be Abercrombie & Fitch, Reeves & Co. LLP, Kent Police, National Health Service, the Army, the Royal Air Force, the Chartered Institute of Marketing and the Chartered Institute of Professional Development. More information is available direct by telephone to 01227 782604.

## 12. Kent Social Services

We understand that last week Kent County Council's Children's Social Services received an unannounced visit from OfSTED. The inspectors visited four districts as well as the county duty team on Tuesday and Wednesday. From what we have learned at the Chamber, the inspectors recorded "significant improvements since the last inspection some 12 months ago" and crucially the inspection did not specify any 'priorities for action'. This represents considerable progress and something of a triumph for

Jenny Whittle, Ann Allen and their team at County Hall. We look forward to reading the new OfSTED report when it is published.

### **13. Thanet Surcharge**

The difference in prices between a litre of unleaded petrol in Thanet and in Canterbury has widened to record levels. Tesco Broadstairs Extra is charging 134.9p for what can be bought at ASDA Canterbury for 129.7p and at Wincheap Service Station and Morrisons Canterbury for 129.9p. The 5p per litre penalty for Thanet residents and businesses amounts to over £3.00 per tank for the average car, adding costs to every household budget and every trading company in Thanet. It also amounts to a disincentive to shoppers, tourists and visitors who wish to travel in their own vehicle. We shall again be writing to the petrol companies seeking an explanation. This is something up with which we will not put.

### **14. Do Something About It**

Are you one of those who just sit backs and complains? Or are you one of those who seeks to do something about it? Our good friends at Locate In Kent have joined forces with the Thanet & East Kent Chamber to assemble a body of evidence to promote better conditions for companies trading in Thanet. If you have a few moments free, please complete the survey to be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GOMYC7M> If you feel that the planning committee of Thanet District Council is acting against the best interests of job creating enterprises, as in the recent notorious decision to block a new state-of-the-art Golf Academy at Manston, this is an opportunity to state your case. Similarly, if the development of Manston Airport with the creation of a possible 3,000 jobs is close to your heart, then feel free to express your views. On the other hand, if you consider any post war development as being horribly modern, you are perfectly entitled to state your views clearly, presumably on a computer you have borrowed from someone else.

### **15. Remove the Blockages**

News has reached the Chamber of blockages at our ports. Specifically, it seems that some of our exporters are finding their goods being delayed at Tilbury Docks and Manchester Airport due to excessively bureaucratic procedures with the result that foreign buyers are being deterred from buying from our manufacturers. In one recent case, a Bedford truck converted into a fuel tanker was delayed at Tilbury for seven weeks before the authorities relented. A consignment of British-made fuel pumps and filters was delayed for over a month at Manchester Airport. It took longer to release the goods than it would have taken to deliver them by sea to their destination in East Africa. All these delays add storage costs and disaffect customers. The Logistics Performance Index published by the World Bank benchmarks countries for their efficiency at transporting goods. The United Kingdom ay have scored a respectable 8<sup>th</sup> place overall in the 2010 data out of a total of 155 countries. There is no sense of triumph in outperforming Somalia which is bottom of the list, but there would be in beating our competitors in Europe. Sadly, the UK lags behind Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, Norway and Finland, not to mention Japan and Singapore for "Efficiency of the clearance process (i.e. speed, simplicity and predictability of formalities) by border control agencies, including Customs". If we are to maximise output from our factories for export, the delays at our ports and airports will have to be reduced.

### **16. Welfare Reform & Business**

Chamber Co-President Laura Sandys MP will be one of the speakers at the Thanet Voluntary & Community Sector Forum (TVCSF) event entitled Raising Awareness and Expectations scheduled for Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October at St Georges C of E Foundation School in Broadstairs. With an aim to "bridge the gap between potential employers and employees", the sessions will also illustrate how companies can benefit from disabled people in their workforce and from the support available to enlightened bosses looking to increase their profits. TVSCF is a respected member of this Chamber with a fine record for community support. Their events are always well organised and any delegates can expect to enjoy a thoroughly useful and practical day. Further details are available direct from Kay or Cara by telephone to 01843 609 686 and by email to [cara@tvcsf.org.uk](mailto:cara@tvcsf.org.uk).

### **17. Energy Costs**

Martyn Young of Atlantic Business Resources, tel: 0781 353 7456 and 08456 185088, has once more sent the Chamber an update on commercial energy costs. Martyn notes some reductions in utility charges since last month but recognises the "still huge year-on-year increases". He considers that the rising trend in energy prices may continue for some time in the future. As he puts it: "Longer term the energy companies seem to be expected to fund a large part of the £200bn needed to renew the UK energy infrastructure, which is likely to drive prices up." Martyn is convinced that there is a pressing need to reform the energy markets in order to: "outlaw the 'rollover' B2B contracts as I see no good reason for the privileged position the energy supply companies occupy in being able to write and enforce their own supply contracts without reference to the customer. " Well put,

sir. Local companies have seen massive rises in their energy costs in the last four years which has severely reduced margins for those with heavy usage requirements.

## 18. Venerable Elvis Speaks

Regular readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider will be familiar with Thanet's own hermit, the remarkable Venerable Elvis. It is rumoured that he spoke to Major Henry Percy when this distinguished staff officer landed in Broadstairs with the first news of Wellington's victory at Waterloo. His great age is ascribed to his basic diet and aesthetic lifestyle, Avoiding temptation and eschewing modern domestic appliances, he lives in a hovel between the disused power plant at Richborough and the abandoned quarry in Manston. His whereabouts are known only to our staff reporter. Despite his self-imposed exile, the Venerable Elvis has acquired a reputation in financial circles for astute comments on the markets, often with a remarkable grasp of current affairs. Anxious to hear his views on the crisis in the Eurozone, last week our reporter braved the early morning mists and took the secret pathways to the Venerable Elvis's humble abode. Finding the great man sipping dandelion tea and stroking his long grey beard in silent contemplation, our reporter held back for a few minutes before approaching this sage of sages and asking him: "Bearing in mind the severe indebtedness of Greece, could you please give our readers your thoughts on the current economic cycle in the European Union?" The Venerable Elvis was unsurprised by the question and after a pause of just 15 minutes, short by his standards, he said: "Greece has sharply increased its production and exports of mayonnaise and hummus which leads me to conclude that Europe is indeed facing a double dip recession." We are fortunate to have such a wise man in our midst.

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**It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.**  
For details of membership, email [admin@tekcc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekcc.co.uk)

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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