



Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

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1. Fujifilm Triumphs

We offer our congratulations to Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems in Broadstairs which has won the Best Process Plant Award in the prestigious 2011 Best Factory Awards. Threatened with a diminishing market in commercial screen ink products in 2005, the company embraced innovation with a radical change in production priorities. Operations Director Colin Boughton explains this as: "Digital was still in low volumes at that time, but we started to realise that it wouldn't remain a niche market for long." Not only was Fujifilm obliged to upgrade its machinery and processes to a much higher standard, but it had to re-educate its suppliers to match the premium quality required. Aided by Kaizen quality expert Yoshi Sata, Fujifilm transformed its product lines with spectacular success. High margin digital ink sales have soared to £20 million and now account for 40% of turnover. Lean development is seen as a key driver of profits and this has been accompanied by a wide-ranging waste reduction programme that has reduced landfill from 53% to 10%. Waste materials are now routinely shredded, reprocessed and may appear as car bumpers, that's fenders if you are an American, or animal bedding. Gary Burgess who carries the unreduced title of Lead Facilitator Lean Development Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems Limited summed up the philosophy of his company in empowering the workforce: "Every employee is an expert in their own square yard". There are plans to add an extra 1,800 sq. metres of factory space to the Broadstairs plant. Colin Boughton, Gary Burgess, Barry Cooper and all the management team at Fujifilm have shown what great management can bring when allied to excellent quality control and a happy workforce.

2. News For Commercial Property Owners

We are grateful to James Galbraith of County Financial Services, tel: 01843 265070, for drawing our attention to the Business Premises Renovations Allowance (BPPA). He tells us that the BPPA was due to expire on the 11th April 2012 and adds: "However in the budget announcements earlier this year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr George Osborne, declared the scheme would be extended by a further five years from this original date of expiry The BPPA was originally established with the sole aim to encourage the conversion and renovation of empty business premises in designated, so-called "disadvantaged" areas, by the introduction of a 100 per cent tax relief incentive. This relief allows a property owner of a qualifying building to claim 100 per cent tax relief for any qualifying capital expenditure when converting or renovating a disused commercial property." This will interest some owners of commercial properties who might like to give James a call for further information.

3. Harrington's Halloween Homilies

Chamber member John Harrington of Harrington Associates, tel: 07810 713023, publishes a quarterly guide for businesses. Entitled Business Alert, it is full of useful tips and guidance to help your business prosper. John sprinkles his sound business advice with readable snippets and references to recent publications, together with his own comments on contemporary events. In his column "The Way I See It", he turns his attention to the results of a survey of 2,453 Londoners and 600 small and medium-sized companies. He is understandably shocked by some of the findings from 18 – 24 year olds and concludes: "It seems as if we have now bred a generation that fears the pressure and responsibility of starting a business. Now that terrifies me more than bird flu!" He adds later: "The fear of the unknown is often worse than the reality. The over-55s have experienced real stress and found ways to deal with it, whilst the youngsters fear the thought of it. Whatever happened to the invincibility of youth?" There is much comfort here for the older members of the Chamber, although not everyone will agree with John's final speculation: "Maybe the Princes' Trust should merge with the Samaritans." To find some helpful suggestions for your business or if you just want a good read, see John's thoughts at <http://www.harrington-associates.co.uk/images/newsletters/harr.assoc.newsletter.oct.2011.pdf> John Harrington is an accredited Executive Associate at the Institute for Independent Business.

4. Business Advisory Clinics and One Million

The Chamber's Business Advisory Clinics in Broadstairs and Dover have access to benign investors in the East Kent Coastal Business Community who collectively have more than one million pounds available for investment in companies trading in the Dover and Thanet districts, subject to certain terms and conditions. Start-ups and established companies may qualify. Applicants to this fund should make an appointment to attend one of the Business Advice Clinics which take place in Broadstairs on the first Friday of the month and in Dover on the first Wednesday of the month. Due to staff holidays, the booking desk will be closed for the week commencing Monday 31st October 2011 but will reopen on Monday 7th November 2011. All applicants should email manager@tekc.co.uk to arrange an appointment.

5. HMS Jervis Bay

Saturday of next week is not only the anniversary of Guy Fawkes's failed plot to blow up parliament, but it also marks the day when HMS Jervis Bay, an armed merchant ship, attacked the German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer in 1940. Captain Fegen of the Jervis Bay was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his actions and the grateful thanks of the crews in the 32 ships of the 37 ship convoy he was protecting who escaped as a result of his ship's gallant attack. The Admiral Scheer, officially listed as a heavy cruiser of the Kriegsmarine, had a top speed of 20 knots and boasted 6 x 28 cm guns in triple turrets, 8 x 15 cm guns in single turrets and 8 torpedo tubes. She was the most successful capital ship commerce raider of WWII. By comparison, the former SS Jervis Bay of the Aberdeen and Commonwealth Line was an aging steamer built in 1922 with a few pop guns and a maximum speed of 15 knots. "Like a bulldog attacking a bear" was the description of the action by Captain Tony Braithwaite of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners speaking from the pulpit at a commemorative service at Chatham Historic Dockyard last year. Our many members in the maritime sector will be pleased to know that the names of the 253 merchant sailors and Royal Navy crew who perished in the short, sharp battle will be among the 1.7 million fatalities to be commemorated on the National War Memorial proposed for Dover's White Cliffs. As the architect, John Pegg explained: "It is important that we engrave the names of those killed in the merchant navy as well as those in the armed services". The War Graves Commission has made a splendid film of the Jervis Bay service which can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/16928428>. As we approach Remembrance Day, the account puts the actions of the rioters in Tottenham and Croydon in a proper perspective.

6. Marketing East Kent

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber has been invited by Locate In Kent to bring forward views on how Kent may be marketed in order to attract more inward investment from the UK and overseas. We welcome the contribution of Chamber members who should address their comments by email to admin@tekc.co.uk.

7. Emergency First Aid

First Aid is just one of the many courses available at Chamber member ISS Training. Courses can be delivered on-site or at the company's training suite at Manston. Options include Customer Care, Health & Safety, Fire Prevention and Manual Handling. Bespoke training packages are also available by arrangement. The next Emergency First Aid at Work course is scheduled to begin on 28th November 2011. For details of this and all other ISS programmes contact Clare

Baker by telephone to 01843 825932 or by email to clarebaker@issllp.co.uk. Other training providers of interest to members include Avanta Enterprise Ltd of Ramsgate tel: 01843 570250; Canterbury Christ Church University of Broadstairs and Canterbury tel: 01227 782196; Maximus Employment & Training of Ramsgate tel: 01843 808410; Profile Development & Training of Broadstairs tel: 01843 609300; St John Ambulance of Maidstone tel: 01732 876417; Training Solutions of Manston tel: 01843 821580 and TVCSF of Ramsgate tel: 01843 609686.

8. Disability Hub Conference & Laura Sandys MP

Chamber member TVCSF hosted a Disability Hub Conference at St George's C of E School in Broadstairs yesterday, as announced in previous editions of the Thanet & East Kent Insider. A more detailed report will follow in the next edition, but it is worth noting the opening speech by Laura Sandys MP, who is Chairman of the all-party group at Westminster on epilepsy. She said: "I am keen to take away the stigma from epilepsy." She related that Prime Minister David Cameron had committed to work with her in this important area. Readers will recall that David Cameron's own son Ivan died at the tender age of 6 years after suffering from severe epilepsy and cerebral palsy. Laura also highlighted the need for greater public understanding of mental health: "One in five people will have at some point some form of mental health condition". She added that mental health issues may not be an exciting area, but promised: "3,600 additional therapists in the community in mental health". Benefit claimants will have new opportunities to work on the basis that: "The opportunity is there if you have the capacity. The new emphasis will be on what you can do, not what you can't do."

9. Business Inspection Shake Up

Jon Cleverdon of Cleverdons Accountants informs the Chamber that a major overhaul of the government's business inspection regime is expected. In a report on a speech by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, we understand that HMRC, the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive have been instructed to be more business-friendly and to "understand that their job is to make businesses lives easier, not harder." A reduction in the number and frequency of inspections is promised with a maximum of two visits a year to be introduced under the new guidelines.

10. Thanet District Council

On Wednesday, 19th October 2011, members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber's Business Development Forum met at the Kent Innovation Centre in Broadstairs for a liaison meeting with three senior staff at Thanet District Council; Sue McGonigal, Chief Executive, Madeline Homer, Director of Community Services and Louise Askew, Economic Development Manager. The event follows the concerns expressed by the Chamber's Planning Forum in the light of recent decisions by the Council's Planning Committee. Unsurprisingly, the Council's refusal of planning permission for a proposed Golf Academy at Manston was cited as an example of where a more business-friendly approach was required. One hotelier remarked that Thanet could be an all-year-round centre for golf breaks if the Council showed a more energetic approach.

11. Thanet District Council and Delays

One major investor in Thanet noted the six-figure costs he had accumulated through delays in getting a response from TDC's planning department and said that such delays acted as a significant disincentive to investment. There was general agreement to the recommendation that TDC's promotion of Thanet should be much more business-like with a greater emphasis on supporting job creation and inward investment. Comparisons were made with neighbouring councils where companies receive a pro-active service that extends to out-of-hours exchanges and positive encouragement to business development and start-ups. One delegate noted that four years previously, the Audit Commission had invited comments on the Council's attitude to business and had received warm approval of its assistance to companies of all sizes. It would be most unlikely to receive the same response today. The Council has yet to respond to the invitation to support the Chamber's successful Business Advice Clinics which have been operating since last April.

12. Thanet District Council and Printing

There were many comments regarding the Council's procurement policies. The meeting heard that the Council outsources printing to companies in Northampton, Eastbourne, Rochester, and London. The Council's 'Buy Local'

policy apparently does not extend to its own backyard. No Thanet company is on the approved list of printing suppliers.

13. Thanet District Council and Surveying

In a similar vein to the printing issue, a local chartered surveyor said that contracts for local survey work were routinely given to London-based companies who would then telephone him to ask for his advice. He added that the Council's predilection for London was in some cases resulting in invoice costs three times higher than would be the case with a suitably qualified local supplier.

14. Thanet District Council and Information

The owner of an accommodation and tourism facility welcoming over 10,000 visitors and guests a year found it difficult to source information from the Council on local events. As with other Chamber members, he felt that the contribution of his company to the local economy is not acknowledged or appreciated by the Council. The Chamber has calculated that the business in question adds over £1 million pounds to the visitor spend in Thanet. Another Chamber member who supplies dry foods to independent retailers predicted dire consequences in Margate if the Tesco development were to be allowed. His company has a turnover in excess of £4 million but has found it increasingly difficult to justify its continuing location in Thanet.

15. Thanet District Council and Employment Services

The Council was asked to examine why it does not use the Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources (MSTAR) Framework as "it would produce cost savings and greater efficiency". The system was commissioned by the Local Government Professional Services Group (LGPSG) as a national framework for managed services for agency workers.

16. Thanet District Council and Website

Attention was drawn to the Council's website and its promise that "Thanet is open for business". A printout of the the website that morning under the menu title Business Support Organisations showed Business Link, which has wound down its operations and will formally end all regional support on 25th November 2011. Also listed was SEEDA which has effectively ceased its support mechanisms prior to its closure next spring. Members called for greater support for companies and organisations with their main headquarters in Thanet. It was agreed that as the largest business support body in Thanet, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, is well placed to serve as a source of communication between the Council and local businesses.

17. Thanet District Council and Future Plans

The meeting heard that cuts in spending and staff had affected the Council's operations. We also learned that a new Regeneration Manager is due to start work soon and that he or she would focus on some of the issues raised. Apparently, a Thanet Regeneration Board had been established by the Council. Members have received no details of this and we have yet to hear of how this is constituted and who will be represented on the board. We will keep our many readers posted on developments. The next meeting is due to take place before Christmas when it is hoped that Cllr Bob Bayford, Leader of Thanet District Council, will be in attendance.

18. Honeymoon Period

Regular readers will know that from time to time we report on the progress of the Doncaster Rovers football team. Supporters of this South Yorkshire club are not renowned for their consumption of prawn sandwiches. They not only maintain a high tolerance of basic foods, but have a resigned acceptance that victories are rare and the traditional virtues of honest endeavour are not always rewarded when faced with bigger budgets and imported foreign stars from more fashionable clubs. Indeed, fashion and Doncaster do not often occur in the same line up, whereas 'languishing' and 'defensive lapses' make regular appearances with 'consolation goal' marking the occasional crumb of comfort. Recording just two wins in the last six months, the honeymoon period for new manager Dean Saunders appears to be over. It was no surprise on Saturday 22nd October when the Doncaster team was beaten by a handsome margin away from home by Portsmouth FC. What did surprise one Chamber member, a life-long Pompey fan, who witnessed the match, was the presence of a couple whose honeymoon has yet to begin. There was the bride complete in a voluminous white wedding

dress sitting in the home stand next to her new husband who was avidly watching the game. What surprised him even more was the comment of a grizzled, long-suffering Doncaster fan; there were a surprising number of die-hard fans who had made the trip from South Yorkshire. Having espied the young bride across the pitch, he turned to one and all and declared: "That just isn't right on her wedding day. Not right at all. The bridegroom, he has gone too far, much too far. She'll be expecting to go to the match every week from now on." They breed them tough, up north.

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Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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