



## Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

### Thanet & East Kent Insider

18<sup>th</sup> February 2012 Issue No.: 180

#### 1. Get a Share of £40 million

In liaison with the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be hosting a Chamber Business Networking breakfast on Friday 2nd March 2012 in Sandwich entitled "Get a share of £40 million". The main speaker will be the Co-President of the Thanet Chamber, Laura Sandys MP, who has played a leading role in securing the Regional Growth Fund of £40 million to be spent on stimulating the economy in East Kent. Within the next two months, companies willing and able to create jobs in the districts of Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Canterbury will be invited to submit applications to the fund. The leader of Kent Council, Cllr Paul Carter, has stated that unlike other areas of the country, there is '*considerable free rein*' on the allocation of the business support funding. Booking is essential. To book your place, email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) or [mail@doverchamber.co.uk](mailto:mail@doverchamber.co.uk) with the subject line "Business Networking Breakfast 2 March 2012". Tickets include a full English breakfast and cost £12 for Chamber members and £16 for non-members subject to space available. After the breakfast at the BayPoint Club, the former Pfizer Sports & Social Club, delegates will be invited to tour the buildings and facilities of this 17 acre site which is attracting additional investment for an upgrade to industry-leading standards as a corporate and community facility.

#### 2. Supplier List

It is easy to exhort others to "Buy Local", it has not always been easy for some public bodies to do it. As regular readers will know, in the last financial year, Thanet College spent £1.3 million with local suppliers, creating strong links with Chamber members and demonstrating best practice in business liaison. Chamber members are in a position to offer better service and response times than remote firms only accessible via the Internet or through an overseas call centre. Attached to this email is a classified list of selected Chamber members from the Thanet & East Kent and Dover District Chambers of Commerce who can be expected to

offer you an excellent combination of price, quality and service. Please keep this list near your cheque book or on-line banking terminal. Almost every sector is represented. Whether you need an accountant, an antique desk, a boarding kennel, a coach hire, a fire alarm, freight forwarders, printer, school, solicitor, waste management company or even a water cooler, you will find the product or service is available not far from your office. If you buy from them, there is every reason for them to buy from you.

### 3. How Are We Doing?

The latest unemployment figures for East Kent reveal a depressing picture. The 23 wards in Thanet show a collective year-on-year increase in joblessness of 14.3%. The increase from this time last year in unemployment benefit claimants in the Dover District is the highest in Kent at 20.2%. The Neighbouring districts of Shepway (10.6%) and Canterbury (18.8%) give little reason for optimism. Let it be emphasized that the percentages just quoted relate to the decline in employment over the previous twelve months. The current unemployment rates in East Kent districts are shown in the first column below. Thanet again tops the list at 6.2%. Of the wards with 100 or more unemployed, just three in Thanet show an improvement since January 2011, Birchington South, Cliftonville East and Viking, and there are none in the Dover district. The state is supporting nearly a thousand people in Cliftonville West on unemployment benefit. At 19.2%, Cliftonville West has the highest unemployment in Kent; Dover's Castle Ward is not far behind at 14.2%. Of particular concern is the data on youth unemployment which reveals sharp differences in East Kent. In the 18 – 24 year old age group, youth unemployment in Thanet has risen to 14.4% and in the Dover District to 10.5%. The shops and restaurants in the Canterbury area are obviously providing more opportunities for school leavers as the current rate there is just 3.3%, considerably less than half the national rate for all claimants. Is there anything you can do about it? The short answer is: "You certainly can". For those living or working in Thanet, the development of Manston Airport presents the best opportunity in the medium term for job creation in and around the district. Make your views known to Thanet District Council, see "More on Manston" below. For those living or working on the Dover District, the Dover People's Port Trust will soon announce how for £10 you can support the bid to purchase the Port of Dover which will be the single biggest change in port management since Dover became a trust port in 1606. Finally, you can use the attached list of local companies for your own purchases.

### 4. Give Us the Facts

	January 2012		Change since Jan 2011	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
<b>Ashford</b>	1,934	2.7%	+152	+8.5%
<b>Canterbury</b>	2,582	2.6%	+409	+18.8%
<b>Dover</b>	2,735	4.2%	+460	+20.2%
<b>Maidstone</b>	2,611	2.7%	+346	+15.3%
<b>Shepway</b>	2,833	4.6%	+271	+10.6%
<b>Swale</b>	3,626	4.3%	+488	+15.6%
<b>Thanet</b>	4897	6.2%	+613	+14.3%
<b>Kent</b>	37,713	3.5%	+4,619	+14.0%
<b>South East</b>	146,956	2.7%	+11,697	+8.6%
<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>1,586.864</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>+141,485</b>	<b>+9.8%</b>

### 5. More on Manston

We make no apology for again drawing the attention of members to the current consultation exercise being administered by Thanet District Council regarding the future of the airport at Manston. Businesses are invited to write before 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 stating whether they approve of the proposals for expansion of the airport where the issue of night flights is currently under discussion. The feedback from Chamber members to date

has strongly supported the plans by Infratil, the airport owners, to extend the range of services with a view to creating around 3,000 jobs by 2018. Muttering your thoughts over a beer to like-minded colleagues is likely to have less effect on the outcome than registering your view to the council. This can be done by email to [consultation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@thanet.gov.uk) or by letter to Consultation, Thanet District Council, PO Box 9, Margate, CT9 1XZ. In order to be considered, all communications must include the writer's full name and address with the postcode clearly marked. The Chamber maintains an archive of reports and position papers which we will gladly send to you by email on application to [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Manston Airports Reports Please".

## **6. The Case Against Airport Expansion**

Following the report on the January Chamber Business Networking Breakfast in the edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012, we received some comments from Thanet District Councillor Steve Alexandrou who pointed out that there have been people living in Ramsgate since before the Battle of Hastings. Oddly, not one of these long-term residents has contacted the Chamber. Why is that we wonder? But, we very much welcome Cllr Alexandrou's interest and look forward to more district councillors taking a close interest in liaising with the district's largest business support body. For the record, here is the full text of the email from Cllr Alexandrou which he has kindly offered to us to publish. "May I just say that there has been a settlement of sorts in Ramsgate for over 1,000 years. Did the airport operator not know this prior purchasing a slab of concrete? and to defend the people on the flight path, when they bought their homes there were no night flights and many who enquired as to whether aircraft flew over certain areas pre-purchase were told by TDC officers they were not on the flight path, how does this happen when the people in question live in Nethercourt? Please print this next week as a Councillor reply."

## **7. Public Office**

What do we expect from our public officials? It is easy to criticize councillors and other democratically elected officials, it is much harder to subject yourself to public scrutiny and stand for election. The majority of councillors at every level of government give much of their free time to meetings and community affairs, making themselves available out of hours when the majority of citizens are content to be with their families, watching television, playing golf, in the pub or in some cases with work colleagues dishing the dirt on their bosses and representatives. It is worth pausing to consider the high standards we expect from public officials. This was considered in detail by the late Lord Nolan and his colleagues who produced what are now described as the Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life. Michael Nolan, or to give him his full title, Baron Nolan of Brasted in the County of Kent, was one of our own and it is worth listing the seven principles.

### **8. Nolan Principle One: Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

### **Nolan Principle Two: Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Nolan Principle Three: Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Nolan Principle Four: Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Nolan Principle Five: Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

### **Nolan Principle Six: Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Nolan Principle Seven: Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **9. Comment on Nolan Principles**

The Committee on Standards in Public Life is the independent body funded by government to promote the Nolan Principles. Its current Chairman is Sir Christopher Kelly, another Kentish man born west of the Medway, who is reputed to be a keen poker player. Details of the committee's operations can be found on the website at [www.public-standards.gov.uk](http://www.public-standards.gov.uk). It is worth noting that nowhere in the Nolan commandments does it state that public officials should be skilled enough to do their job; although one of the original recommendations stated: "There is much public concern about appointments to Quango Boards and a widespread belief that these are not always made on merit."

## **10. Sickness & Absenteeism**

We are grateful to Lynn Marchant of Kent Mindful Employer for drawing our attention to NHS Plus. This is a free service for small businesses in England that has just been launched to help companies reduce sickness absence and improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce. The new Health for Work Advice Line will provide help and support to organisations with fewer than 250 employees who feel the burden of sickness absence the hardest. A government review published last November found that the current system was detrimental to any employers without their own occupational health services department. Free telephone advice for employers is now available via the freephone number 0800 0 77 88 44. There is also what is described in civil service-speak as "an on-line knowledge base" which has some useful advice on topics such as "Is my employee actually ill?". All this can be found at [www.health4work.nhs.uk](http://www.health4work.nhs.uk). There is also a live chat-line open during office hours on weekdays and a facility to post your question about your specific needs. All in all, this looks like a useful, business-friendly service.

## **11. News From Japan**

We are grateful to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in Japan (METI) for updating the Chamber on developments at Fujifilm. In an official news release, we learn that "Fujifilm Corporation's domestic sales operations for imaging products conducted by the Consumer Sales Division will be spun off and merged into FujiFilm Imagetec. Through this merger, the company aims to build an integrated organization to cover all sales activities in the imaging sector, including both consumer and business products, and thereby improve operational efficiency. To further increase its corporate value, FujiFilm Imagetec will aggressively engage in new business areas (development and sales of new services/products aimed at smartphones and mobile devices) and seek to improve its earning power and create new demand." This announcement follows the decision last month by Fujifilm's great rival, Kodak, to file for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Protection in the US. Kodak shares sold for over USD 90 in 1997 but were valued on the NY Stock exchange at USD 0.36 when the company was delisted last month. The old adage that "Change is inevitable but progress is optional" is aptly demonstrated in the progress of these two companies. Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems based in Broadstairs won the Best Process Plant Award in the prestigious 2011 Best Factory Awards. In 2005, this company's markets were severely threatened by a sharp fall in sales of commercial screen ink products. Helped by quality expert Yoshi Sata, and a root and branch reform, FujiFilm upgraded its product lines with soaring success leading to high margin

digital ink sales above £20 million. Enlightened management coupled to a ferocious attention to waste reduction have ensured that the Thanet factory is facing a bright future.

## 12. A Special One

This edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider refers to some of the differences in employment in neighbouring districts. Indeed, our county is blessed with a rich variety of environments, from the concentrated agglomerations where many of our great companies flourish to the much more sparsely populated farm lands where time-honoured practices still prevail. We are grateful to one chamber member who recounts a story of his recent excursion to the countryside. We have our doubts about this tale, but we leave it to readers to judge for themselves. "I was delivering a photocopier to this remote farm about 20 miles or so from Maidstone, but it was right in the middle of nowhere. Anyway, having assured myself that there was electricity in the farmhouse, I set up the machine and all was well. On my way back out to the van with the farmer, I noticed that one of his pigs had a wooden leg. 'I've never seen that before', I said, 'What's the story?' The farmer explained: 'That there pig is very special. Very special indeed. You see not long ago, there was a fire at the back of the house. Well, that pig came running up to the door, climbed on top of the porch and banged on my bedroom window. He woke me up, he did. I came down and put out the fire. Without that pig, I wouldn't be here now'. 'Oh, I see', said our chamber member 'Is that when the pig hurt his leg?' 'Oh no', said the farmer. 'It was nothing like that. Last year, I was tidying the kitchen garden when a tiger appeared. It had escaped from that wild animal park down the road. It was huge and I thought my days were numbered. Just as the tiger was about to spring, that pig arrived and charged the big cat. There was a bit of a scrap and eventually, the tiger ran off'. Our Chamber member said: 'Oh so, is that when the pig lost its leg?' 'Oh, no, it was nothing like that', said the farmer, 'But a few months ago it was one those wet and blustery days and I was on my tractor down by the old Rhee wall when I went into a ditch. The tractor turned over and I was drowning, I don't mind telling you. Suddenly, the pig arrives, drags me by the sleeve and pulls me out from under the water. He's some pig that one'. 'So that's when he hurt his leg then,' said our Chamber member with some relief. 'Oh, no, it was nothing like that', said the farmer. Realising, that the mysteries of photocopier maintenance were as nought compared to the pig before him, our Chamber member said with some exasperation. 'Well, go on then. You must tell me. How did he get that wooden leg?' 'Well', said the farmer with a twinkle in his eye. 'A special pig like that, you don't want to be eating all at once.'"

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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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