



Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

3rd March 2012 Issue No.: 181

1. Get A Share of £40 Million

Nearly 100 Chamber members attended the Business Networking Breakfast at the BayPoint Club Sandwich yesterday to hear the Chamber Co-President Laura Sandys MP outline the latest news about the £40 million Regional Growth Fund earmarked for the districts of Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Canterbury. In a comprehensive review of the criteria required for a successful bid, Laura emphasized the importance of SMEs in stimulating employment and producing the much-needed growth that the government is targeting for East Kent. She stressed her shock and dismay at the announcement by Pfizer just over a year ago that it was to close its Sandwich facility with the loss of 2,400 jobs and said that Kent County Council and East Kent MPs were united in ensuring that key decision-makers in the cabinet are aware of the need to implement appropriate measures to restore our fortunes. Progress to date has included the retention of 650 to 700 jobs at the Discovery Park, the new name for the former Pfizer site, the award of Enterprise Zone status, visits from David Willetts and George Osborne and of course the promise of £40 million from the Regional Growth Fund. Laura is convinced that the feedback from London & Metropolitan, the prospective purchaser of the main Pfizer site, is such that we can expect some positive developments there in the very near future. Applications to the RGF are expected to be welcomed from around mid-April. Following Laura's speech, delegates heard short presentations from The Local Business Road Show of Dover and the Trade Shop of Birchington which illustrated neatly the innovative and progressive approaches to marketing that are being advocated by the government and the Chambers in Thanet and Dover. In keeping with our promotion of tourism and exports, a senior manager from Travelex explained how the Chambers were working together to offer a simple on-line system to make foreign exchange dealings cheaper, quicker and simpler. The Thanet & East Kent and the Dover District Chambers of Commerce look forward to working closely with the Regional Growth Fund and Travelex to secure the best possible results for our members and for our East Kent coastal business community.

2. What About RGF Elsewhere?

The Regional Growth Fund secured for East Kent has a distinct advantage in allowing wide selection criteria and a flexible approach to its allocations. As reported in the previous edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, the Leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter, said last November: "In East Kent, we have considerable free rein in how that £40

million is allocated to support business growth with the aim to create 5,000 jobs". Nonetheless, readers will be interested in the experiences of specialist RGF consultants in other parts of the country. We are grateful to Regeneris of Manchester and London for this report. "Across Rounds 1 and 2, the average cost per job created (including direct and indirect) has been around £4,000. The cost per direct job, which may be of greater interest to BIS, has been approximately £21,000. On average, projects and programmes have been able to leverage over £5.00 of private investment into supported activities for every £1.00 of RGF secured. A higher level of leverage will provide comfort that other private funders have bought into the programme, but at the same time bidders need to demonstrate that the RGF funding will be additional and make a genuine difference to the ability of the programme's activities to go ahead."

3. Shirley & Philip Go Global

We have often reported on the innovative and business-friendly activities at Hartsdown Technology College, but never before have we promised an audience of more than one billion for their staff or students. Hartsdown's Pete Barnett informs us that this is precisely what is expected to happen when governor Cllr Shirley Tomlinson and former student Philip Quigley dance their carefully rehearsed steps at the closing ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London's Olympic Stadium on 12th August this year. According to Philip's mother Jacky, who works at the College, her 21 year old son: "has loved to dance since he was a lad". Shirley, a former Mayor of Margate, will be forsaking any formal regalia on the day and confesses: "It's a great thrill and a surprise to be selected." She added: "The rehearsal schedule is pretty full on starting in May but this is a chance of a lifetime that I would never want to miss." The closing ceremony will feature a handover of the Games to Rio; that is Rio de Janeiro of Brazil and not Rio Ferdinand of Manchester United. Can we expect another UK Summer Olympics in our life-times? Perhaps, but it is likely to be many years from now. The greatest show on earth last took place in London in 1948, some 64 years ago. Even the ever-youthful Paul McCartney may have sung his final farewell concert by the time the next closing ceremony reaches our shores.

4. A Time & A Place

If there is a time and place for everything, making light-hearted quips about explosives should not be done at an airport while waiting for a flight. That was unfortunately just what Paul Chambers did in frustration at being kept waiting at Robin Hood Airport in November 2010. He tweeted: "Crap, Robin Hood airport is closed. You've got a week and a bit to get your s**t together otherwise I'm blowing the airport sky high!" Retribution followed. Although following his arrest, the local police allegedly accepted his plea that the message was sent in jest, the Crown Prosecution Service took a different view and he was charged with an offence under the Communications Act 2003, section 127. Some details and comments on the case can be found at <http://thejusticegap.com/2012/02/not-funny>; a page on a website maintained by The Justice Gap, an on-line magazine "about the law aimed at ordinary people as opposed to lawyers, businesses". In an elegantly written defence of Paul Chambers, Kim Evans argues that the CPS has been heavy-handed and that his offence should be written off as: "Not a threat, not to be taken seriously, simply a not terribly funny joke." Our advice to Chamber members contemplating their holidays next summer or about to fly away for Easter is that when you are at the airport do not under any circumstances mention explosives, blowing up anything or bombs. It might be preferable to avoid entirely any word any word beginning with B. This is hard luck on hoteliers in Bombay, Budapest, Barcelona or Bologna but should have no effect whatsoever on the tourist industry in Broadstairs which can now be reached by high-speed train from London St Pancras in less than 90 minutes.

5. Academy FM

The Academy FM Thanet board meeting of February 2012 revealed Thanet's community radio station to be in good health with a growing audience of listeners to its 24/7 programmes broadcast on 107.8 FM. The meeting heard of one avid fan in France who listens to the station regularly via the Internet link accessed at <http://www.academyfmthanet.com>. Support from Ramsgate Town Council, Seaward Copy Shop, Thanet College and the Thanet & East Kent Chamber has helped to link Academy FM more closely to the commercial sector. Station manager Pete Willson believes passionately in involving students from Thanet schools in all aspects of management. With the active support of East Kent's major benefactor, Roger De Haan, Pete and his team are addressing directly and successfully one of the major causes of local youth unemployment; poor skills among 18 – 24 year olds. Whatever the role undertaken, any student involved with the professional operation of the station is expected to be punctual and polite with staff, visitors and listeners. By mastering some of these soft skills, students enhance their self-esteem and undoubtedly present a more encouraging face to prospective employers.

6. Trip To Belgium

We are grateful to our good friends at Canterbury Christ Church University for drawing our attention to the TAVOLA Fine Food Trade Fair on 12th March 2012 in Belgium. We have learned that due to support from the EU Interreg IVA 2 Seas Programme, free places are available to Kent-based companies involved in the food and drink sector. TAVOLA attracts more than 18,000 visitors from 24 countries and provides an ideal opportunity to establish new trading links

with European counterparts. The free package available includes a coach trip from Kent to Kortrijk in Belgium, business meetings, access to the event and exhibitors and lunch on the day. For more details, email international.affairs@kent.gov.uk or call 01622 694046 without delay.

7. More On Manston

Manston Airport has featured in the media during the last two weeks for many reasons. Firstly, yesterday was the final day for submitting views to Thanet District Council on the airport's proposed night-flying policy. Also, on Friday, 24th February, Lady Gale opened the airport's new Equine Border Inspection Post. This splendid facility will enable Manston to welcome high-value show jumpers and race horses at a cost to the customer considerably below that at competing airports in the South East. Manston is confident that it can provide a cost-effective premium service to horses and humans arriving in the UK for the London 2012 Olympics. Manston Airport was represented at the world's largest freight aviation exhibition held last month in Mumbai, India. On his return from the sub-continent, Group Freight Development Manager Allan MacQuarrie said: "Our freight customers are attracted by our industry-beating turnaround times for flights, competitive prices and fewer delays than at other UK airports. It is a highly competitive marketplace but we are confident that we will secure new freight customers and grow this part of the Manston business during the year." With a runway 2,752 metres long and 61 metres wide, our local airport is an ideal position to bring tourists to our shops, freight to our warehouses and now horses to our meadows.

8. Simon Scharma in Margate

Chamber member Turner Contemporary has announced that the celebrated historian Simon Scharma CBE will be the main speaker at the inaugural Turner Lecture and Dinner on Wednesday 25th April 2012. More details of this event will feature in the next edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, but readers with an interest in history and the arts may like to reserve the evening in their diaries. Booking opens on 25th March 2012.

9. Voluntary Sector in Thanet

We have been advised by the Thanet Voluntary & Community Sector Forum that it will henceforth be known as Thanet Community Networks (TCN). This news may come as a great relief to anyone in the area who could never remember the order of the initials of TVCSF, but it will also enable TCN to work with East Kent Voluntary Action Support to explore new avenues of funding. After many years of steering TVCSF successfully through decidedly choppy waters, captain of the ship Steve Ward is stepping down as Chairman but takes with him the warm thanks of the voluntary sector throughout Thanet who all appreciate the tremendous job he has done since 1996 when he first established the group. There is probably not a ward anywhere in Thanet that has not benefited from the voluntary services coordinated by TVCSF at some time in the past 16 years. The good news is that Lynne Sutton, Kay Byatt and Cara Thorpe will remain in post and can be reached at the Margate Media Centre, tel: 01843 609686. Full contact details are available on the website at www.thanetcommunitynetworks.org.uk. We wish this Chamber member every success as it continues the very valuable work it undertakes to support the less fortunate in our community.

10. Engineers Wanted

We have received an enquiry from a large and expanding local company which is seeking to recruit six graduate engineers. Four of the posts are for a permanent job and two for a 9-month contract. All submissions please by email to admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Graduate Engineer".

11. Business Roadshow

The Local Business Roadshow hosted a promotional event at The Perrys Crabble Stadium prior to the Dover Athletic FC v Woking FC football match on Saturday 25th February 2012. The Local Business Roadshow is a marketing initiative that promotes local companies in towns and city centres without the expense of a shop, business rates or similar standing costs. From as little as £6.74 per week the Local Business Roadshow will showcase your brand at a rolling exhibition that visits Dover Market Square, Canterbury High Street and the main shopping areas of Ashford, Folkestone and Westwood Cross. For more details of the many packages available, see www.localbusinessroadshow.com.

12. News About Tradeshop

Chamber member Tradeshop offers to remove the anxiety and worry from transactions with contractors. Household and business owners have one point of contact with much of the worry over quality service and price negotiations removed. Contractors who are accepted by Tradeshop are given a mark of approval in the market place and a ready source of customers for their products and services. In an exclusive interview with the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, director Toby Young said: "Put simply, our job is to match the Customer with the right Contractor for the

work required". Too good to be true? Contact Toby direct to find out. Tradeshop Birchington office tel: 01843 844822; email info@tradeshop.co.uk

13. Margate Traders

Margate Independent Traders invited the Thanet & East Kent Chamber to a well-attended meeting on the evening of Monday, 27th February in the splendid setting of the Walpole Bay Hotel. The shopkeepers and business owners who filled the downstairs ballroom expressed concerns over the prospect of a Tesco supermarket on Margate seafront. There were also worries about the amount of litter in the streets of Margate and the lack of signs to direct motorists where to park in order to visit the Turner Contemporary.

14. Upgrade Your IT Skills

We know that good numeracy and literacy skills are of little use in many jobs unless they are matched by good IT skills. Profile Development & Training has recognised the local need for training in computer skills with the opening at the end of next week of its new Profile IT Academy at the Kent Innovation Centre, Millennium Way, Broadstairs CT10 2QQ. Work-based programmes will be available alongside a wide range of courses for beginners and IT professionals looking to upgrade their skills. Some of the training attracts government funding. Bespoke packages are also available to match specific company needs. Profile Development & Training welcomes visitors to its Open Day on Friday, 9th March from 1100 hrs when its staff and trainers will be on hand to answer your questions and suggest ways of how your company might make more profit from improving its computer systems, There will be special offers for those who attend as well as the chance to win some free training. For more details, Contact Profile Development & Training by email to admin@profiledt.co.uk or by telephone to 01843 609300.

15. More About Hartsdown

Emily Williams of Hartsdown Technology College informs us that the governing body is looking to recruit governors "with a financial, building and /or legal background." She adds that: "This is an exciting time for the School and we feel this would be a great time for new Governors to join us. We have recently become a New Academy School which means that, as part of providing the very best education for our children, we now have the financial and operational freedoms to make changes to the curriculum to better meet their needs." Governors are expected to attend for a minimum of six meetings a year plus other times by arrangement. If you live in Thanet and have an interest in contributing to one of the most improved schools in Kent, please contact Emily by telephone to 01843 227957 or by email to williamse@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk.

16. Calm Down, Dear

Anyone who has been stopped by the police for speeding and finds that their wife or husband is not always fully supportive may have some sympathy for one member who has told the Chamber of a recent experience in his new Jaguar. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to readers to judge for themselves. "I was taking my wife out for a drive in my new Jag when a police car appeared in the rear view mirror with its blue lights flashing. I duly pulled over at the next lay-by and lowered the window awaiting the arrival of the police officer. 'Morning sir', sounded the uniformed voice, 'I registered you at 82 miles per hour'. 'That cannot be, officer,' I said, 'the cruise control was set at 60 mph and this is a brand new car'. As the doubts in the officer's mind began to surface, my wife intervened. 'Don't be silly, dear. You told me that you hadn't worked out yet how the cruise control works.' The officer reached for his pad and started writing out the ticket. I turned to 'er indoors and said: 'Please let me handle this. I was driving, not you.' My wife replied: 'You should count yourself lucky the radar detector sounded when it did dear or you could have been fined more'. 'Oh, I see. That's what it is, is it. An illegal radar detector', said the officer, 'That'll be two tickets then, sir.' You can understand that by now I was getting a little frazzled. The police officer then said: 'I see that you are not wearing a seat belt, sir.' I answered: 'Of course not, officer, I had to remove it when we stopped to get out my wallet with my licence.' 'Oh, no you didn't dear', said the lady I married 15 years ago, 'You said the seat belt didn't fit and you would adjust it later.' 'Thank you madam'; said the officer, no doubt delighted to receive such support from the general public, and dutifully began work on his third ticket. Nearing the end of my temper, I turned to my dearest heart with the words: 'Look woman, for heaven's sake, you just keep your trap shut for once.' Startled at the raised voice, the policeman asked my wife: 'Does he often shout at you like that?' She looked at the officer straight in the eye and said firmly: 'No officer, only when he's been drinking.'"

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It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.
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