



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

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

**18<sup>h</sup> August 2012 Issue No.: 192**

#### **1. Business Innovation & Skills**

The Chamber's East Kent Business Advice Clinic received some distinguished visitors on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Two Senior Policy Advisors from the Government's Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) joined our EKBAC panel of chartered accountants, senior lawyers, Chief Executives and enlightened entrepreneurs for a detailed briefing on trading conditions in East Kent. Discussions covered all sectors before centering on proposals to promote the growth of the local economy. The advisors stayed with the panel for the full session of the East Kent Business Advice Clinic which welcomed new inward investors and established companies looking to expand. Later, the panel visited three rapidly growing Chamber companies in East Kent which export over half of their production. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber will be working with these companies, BIS and other Chamber members to encourage more favourable trading conditions for local manufacturers.

#### **2. Goal Setting**

Following his previous contributions to the Thanet & East Kent Insider on Time Management, Effective Meetings, Presentations and Problem-solving, chamber member Philip Tilston of Polylink Solutions, tel: 07875 924191, has now submitted the fifth in his series of management advice texts. Regular readers will know that we have quoted Yogi Berra in the past. Edition 164 of 16<sup>th</sup> July 211 mentions many of Berra's priceless sayings of which perhaps the best is: "I'm not going to buy my kids an encyclopaedia. Let them walk to school like I did". Philip ends his account with a most appropriate quotation from this renowned US baseball coach. But first, this is what Philip has to tell us about Goal Setting. "Setting goals is essential to achieving results. They help to set a long

term vision that can then be broken down into smaller goals that provide a roadmap or series of stepping stones on how to get from where we are today to where we want to be. These goals should be written down to help crystallise their importance. Short term goals should be set with resources in mind. Setting too many short term goals for the available resources will not lead to effective results unless they are prioritised. Small companies face almost all the same problems that large companies do. However, small companies have a smaller pool of talented resources to direct at solving those problems. The impact on the business will be much more effective by achieving 80% of the five most important goals than 2% of each of fifty goals. Goals should be SMART i.e. Specific, Measurable results, Agreed with staff, Realistic and have Time deadlines. Progress on achieving the goals should be checked regularly and also the goals themselves need to be reviewed periodically. As Yogi Berra said famously: "If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else" Thank you Philip, this is sound advice with welcome reminders for us all.

### **3. BayPoint Magic**

Earlier today, the BayPoint Club in Sandwich opened its doors to families and sports enthusiasts who were keen to see what was happening on the site of the former Pfizer Sports & Social Club. Blessed with splendid weather, the Open Day provided a welcome opportunity for visitors from all parts of East Kent to join in the fun activities that ranged from a Charity Zumbathon to free use of the hi-tech gym machines which allow you to watch your favourite television programmes while you undertake specific exercises designed to meet your own unique fitness needs. BayPoint staff were delighted with the response from the general public. At a time when school playing fields are under increasing pressure, it is pleasing to know that there are 17 acres of dedicated grounds and facilities available in the heart of the East Kent coastal business community that will inspire a generation to be fitter, healthier and happier. For more details, see the lively website at [www.baypointclub.co.uk](http://www.baypointclub.co.uk).

### **4. Golf Day**

The Chamber Golf Day scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at Prince's Golf Club, Sandwich is now almost fully booked. There is just one place left for a corporate team of four players. When this is taken, we will establish a reserve list for use in the event of cancellations. A prize fund of around £30,000 is on offer. The fee of £85 per player includes refreshments on arrival, green fees, lunch and entry into all the team and individual competitions. Corporate teams participating in the 2012 Golf Day have priority for 2013. For more details, contact the Chamber's Graham Rayner direct, telephone 07899 873535.

### **5. What's All This About Dreamland, Then?**

Cllr Iris Johnston of Thanet District Council was quoted in the Sunday Times of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2013 as saying: "One-fifth of all visitors to Thanet come for Dreamland". The final closure of Dreamland in 2005 represented a body blow for Margate traders. Successful as the Turner Contemporary has been, its benign influence has yet to manifest itself fully outside Margate old town. Thus, the announcement yesterday that Thanet District Council has received approval from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for the compulsory purchase of the Dreamland site will encourage workers, business owners and residents alike that perhaps at last this part of Margate's seafront may return to its busy glory of the past. The Leader of Thanet District Council, Cllr Clive Hart, certainly thinks so. In a much quoted press release he stated: "I'm thrilled with today's announcement. This is a key step to unlocking the regeneration of the Dreamland site". He was thrilled again at the confidence shown by government in the council's ability to work in harmony with The Dreamland Trust to make the dream a reality. "I'm thrilled that the Secretary of State is confident in our plans to help secure the regeneration of Dreamland, and today's announcement moves us closer to delivering this greatly anticipated amusement park."

Our Chamber Co-President, Roger Gale MP, is looking for a swift improvement and reacted to the news with a prompt statement: "We have been blessed with the Turner Contemporary at one end of the bay and cursed with an eyesore at the other. I trust that Thanet Council will now take robust and immediate action to secure the necessary support and funding to bring about the restoration of the scenic railway."

## **6. Haven't We Heard All This Before?**

Chamber members will recall that Jonathan Bryant, the then Director of the Dreamland Trust, gave a presentation to Chamber members in March 2010 at the Fayre House Hotel. In our report in edition 101 of the Thanet & East Insider of 27 March 2010, we summarized Jonathan's talk: "Will the new Dreamland be like the old one? The simple answer is 'No'. The new amusement park will cover around half of the Dreamland site, the other half is scheduled for private sector development. The scenic railway is one of the prized treasures and will be restored to operations. The Dreamland Trust has already acquired many of the former attractions and has recently purchased a big wheel. Jonathan welcomes new ideas but he is keen for the new Dreamland to be attractive to families and tourists of all ages and not to be characterized as a museum of past attractions. Key to the right creative dynamism will be the design, colour schemes, concessions and catering available on site. Tracing the origins of Dreamland to a restaurant and dance hall which opened in 1863, Jonathan gave a lively account of the colourful owners to date who have included 'Lord' George Sanger, John Henry Iles, Billy Butlin, the Benbom Brothers and local entrepreneur, Jimmy Godden. Jonathan paid a warm tribute to the Chairman and founder of the Dreamland Trust, Nick Laister, 'He knows more about seaside amusement parks than anyone else in the UK'. He confirmed that a full team will be in place shortly to ensure an opening in spring 2012." Since uttering those fine words more than two years ago, Jonathan Bryant has moved to the National Trust for Scotland, but Nick Laister remains. Nick has coordinated much of the activity to restore Dreamland and declared yesterday: "The residents and businesses of Thanet, and its many existing and future visitors, have waited far too long for work on this project to start. With our funding in place and our plans drawn up, today's news is hopefully the final major hurdle that we will have to cross." He added that Stage One of the project is now expected to open in Easter 2014.

## **7. How Are We Doing?**

The UK interest rate, exchange rate and unemployment rate give a fair indication of our national economy. The only one of these three measures that can be fairly assessed locally is of course the unemployment rate. Despite some gloomy news about static growth in the UK, monthly changes in the unemployment rates in Kent provide some genuinely positive news. The July 2012 figures reveal that just three districts in Kent suffered a monthly rise in unemployment; Maidstone, Thanet and Shepway, and these rises were all below 1%. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber has always stated that it is the annual figures that indicate a sustainable trend and there are some encouraging signs there too. In the last quarter, there was a drop in the rates of annual increase in most Kent districts suggesting that if the linear trend continues, we could see the year-on-year jobless figures for East Kent fall before the end of 2012. This has already happened in Dartford (-6.4%) and Tunbridge Wells (-7.7%). In the six-month period from February 2012 to July 2012, unemployment in the East Kent districts of Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Canterbury fell by 6.3%, a point to consider in reviewing the annual increases. Gerwyn Davies, Labour Market Adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has issued a note of caution. He is concerned that the upturn in the national job figures may foreshadow jobs cuts later. In a press release of 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012 following the publication of CIPD's Quarterly Labour Market Outlook, he stated: "Recent falls in unemployment suggest that the labour market is on a sound footing, but a closer examination reveals that many employers are holding on to more staff than is required by the current level of demand in order to retain their skills. This is a make or break moment for employers - unless growth picks up many will find that they cannot hold on to some workers any

longer.” This may have been true in East Kent in 2010 and 2011, but we have not seen much evidence of this in the last few months. We will continue to monitor the position closely and keep members updated.

## 8. Give Us The Facts

Unemployment in East Kent

	July 2012		Change since July 2011	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Thanet District	4,824	6.1%	+519	+12.1%
Canterbury District	2,376	2.4%	+103	+4.5%
Dover District	2,643	4.1%	+387	+17.2%
Maidstone	2,430	2.5%	+10	+0.4%
Shepway	2,717	4.4%	+213	+8.5%
Kent	35,949	3.4%	+1,753	+5.1%
South East	136,521	2.5%	+260	+0.2%
Great Britain	1,508,910	3.8%	+27,752	+1.9%

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## 9. Secrets Of Success

The secret of business and personal success is open to interpretation and much discussion, as any bar in the UK will reveal. The success of UK athletes in the London Olympics has surely shown that a backing team is just as important as individual talent and perhaps even more so. Thus, it is with the knowledge that those around us and closest to us deserve appreciation, respect and support that we should try to maximize our own success. The Team GB cycling team won 7 of the 10 track cycling gold medals available. The humility of the British Olympians has provoked some stark comparisons with the bloated egos of professional footballers. Nowhere was the contrast more apparent than in the attitude of Victoria Pendleton. Fresh from her gold and silver medal winning performances, she said that she is now going to retire as: “I’d really like to do a cake-decorating course and a pattern-making course with my mum.” Somehow, it is difficult to imagine a footballer voicing the same ambition after winning the Premiership or qualifying for the Champions League. A defining aspect of Team GB cycling coach Dave Brailsford’s management approach is “the doctrine of marginal gains”. Making consistent and sustained improvements, however small, will produce the progress that will eventually challenge the best in the world. Some readers may recall that one Team GB rider won her heat by one thousandth of a second, which must mean that the polish on her cycling helmet could have made a difference. The message to all East Kent businesses is surely to embrace change and progress in all aspects of operations, making the most of the talents of staff and never to be satisfied with the status quo. As Philip Tilston advises elsewhere in this bulletin, in implementing your change plan, start with the five most important issues before progressing to the minor ones. At the end of the day and reflected at the bottom of your balance sheet, it is probably those minor changes that will ultimately distinguish you from your competitors.

## 10. Buyer Beware

We are grateful to Ann Charman of Kent County Council’s Communications and Community Engagement department for drawing our attention to some warnings from Kent Trading Standards. There is a danger when buying products or services via the Internet that you might assume that the seller is based in the UK if the web address ends with “.co.uk”. Kent Trading Standards informs us that a recent case involving the purchase of a wedding dress from such a site

revealed that that the trader was in fact based in China. We are advised to check with the Trading Standard's website at <http://uk.theshoppingassistant.com> which can show detailed background information on any websites under suspicion. Alternatively, you can of course support your local economy and buy the product in question from the shop around the corner. We are also reminded to avoid responding to unsolicited calls from organisations offering you a prize for a competition you have not entered or pretending to be a Microsoft engineer wanting to access your computer to rid it of a virus. Microsoft does not make unsolicited calls. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is always happy to discuss any concerns members might have with rogue traders. Please email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Trader Query". For information on Payment Protection Insurance refunds and fraudulent companies offering to help, see the website at [http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/publications/technical\\_notes/ppi.html](http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/publications/technical_notes/ppi.html) Finally, if you feel you have been wronged in any financial transaction, expert legal help is available from the following approved East Kent solicitors: Barnes Marsland of Margate & Broadstairs tel: 01843 221466; Boys & Maughan of Margate, Broadstairs, Birchington & Ramsgate tel: 01843 234000; Gardner Croft of Canterbury tel: 01227 813400; Girlings of Ashford, Canterbury, Herne Bay & Margate tel: 01843 220274; Macalister White of Ramsgate tel: 01843 572789; Mowll & Mowll of Dover tel: 01304 873344.

## **11. Did The London Olympics Benefit The UK?**

We are grateful to Cleverdons Chartered Accountants, telephone 01843 866599, for their briefing of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012 on the boost to the national economy from the London 2012 Olympics, We learn that: "British businesses stand to benefit from up to £14 billion worth of investment deals that have been secured in recent weeks as eyes have been on the Olympics. Ministers have also vowed to help firms capitalize on the Games, hoping to create an international business legacy that could bring £13 billion to the UK economy in future years." The event has been used to influence key decision-makers overseas. We read that: "Over 3,000 business leaders have been welcomed to London over the Olympic period, including more than half of the FTSE 100 companies, to encourage investment into Britain. The 12 Global Business summits being held at Lancaster House in London will run into September."

## **12. Did The Olympics Benefit East Kent?**

You would have to be devoid of any patriotic fervour and a hard-hearted Scrooge indeed not to have been enthralled by the succession of British victories in the London Olympics. Some Chamber members admit to screaming at the top of their voices as Mo Farrah rounded the final bend of the 5,000 metres final before holding off the opposition in majestic splendour to win a gold medal. Others, indifferent to the sweaty exertions of the athletes, marvelled at the chiselled beauty and precision of the GB Dressage Team which kept its audience in rapt silence as the final riders nursed their dancing horses towards a winning position. However, few East Kent businesses have reported increased turnover. News reaching the Chamber suggests that July receipts were slightly disappointing overall. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a general acceptance that the showcasing of London and the South East will indeed benefit our image abroad in key export markets. It would be churlish to make too much of the French president's alleged remark on meeting David Cameron on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 that: "The British have rolled out a red carpet for French athletes to win medals." At that time France lay 3<sup>rd</sup> in the medal table and Team GB had yet to win one gold medal. The final table showed Team GB with 29 gold medals and France with 11, or to put it another way: le Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord vingt-neuf, La France onze. As dedicated Europeans, it would be quite wrong to draw attention to the outstanding success of Team GB in comparison to France. It would be distinctly impolite to remind our nearest European neighbour of the difference of 18 in the gold medal tally. Of course, it is quite incorrect to state that the London Olympics was produced under budget. Any private enterprise that quoted £2.4bn for a project that ended up costing four times that sum would now be instituting all sorts of soul-searching to determine why the financial planning had gone so

disastrously wrong. In summary, there have been clear benefits to East Kent employment from the London Olympics, but we must wait a lot longer to see the effects on the local economy and particularly on our export and tourism sectors.

### **13. Ticketing Problem At Paralympics**

The Chamber received a plea from a disabled reader who was having difficulty securing seats for her and her family at the Paralympics. Beth Davis-Hofbauer wrote: "I am a wheelchair user, with a four-year-old autistic son and a nineteen-month-old baby. Naturally we wanted to sit together and, particularly as it's the Paralympics, I assumed there would be adequate provision for this to happen. I was stunned to hear that there was no way that this could happen as there is a policy that wheelchair users can only be accompanied by one other person. I cannot believe that this event, designed to inspire a new generation of athletes, has a discriminatory ticketing policy. It's essential that my husband sits with me as he helps me with things I need to do and clearly my kids can't sit separately. Quite apart from these practical considerations, I want to share this special occasion with my family, but I'm being prevented from doing so just because I am in a wheelchair." You will be pleased to know that Beth has now secured 4 contiguous tickets for the cycling event on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012. However, we share her concern that for whatever reason other families with less media support may not be so lucky. Beth has set up a petition which at the time of writing has secured over 37,000 signatures. If you wish to add your name to the list, see the website at <http://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/international-paralympic-committee-london2012-review-ticketing-policy-for-wheelchair-users> and take heart from the many supportive comments that Beth has received from the general public.

### **14. Hartsdown**

We are grateful to Pete Barnett of Hartsdown Academy for sending details of the Hartsdown A level results which Executive Head Teacher Andy Somers, describes as: "The best ever – the level of achievement is astonishing. Eight sixth formers gained three A grades; five gained two A grades plus other passes; candidates achieved more B grades than ever before. We are so proud of the students' efforts and pleased for them as it opens the door to a world of opportunities for them. They all achieved or surpassed expectations. They will be heading off to university, further education, training and employment and will be able to further broaden their horizons." At a time when the availability of a skilled workforce is increasingly valued by ambitious companies in East Kent, it is encouraging that Hartsdown is making such rapid and sustained progress. Hartsdown Academy will be increasing its commitment to Thanet Skills Studio from next month and continues to promote best practice in education through the East Kent Learning Alliance.

### **15. Learning To Mediate**

Canterbury Christ Church University is offering a one day course entitled "An Introduction to Mediation" on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012, repeated on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The programme is approved by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Council and counts as 6 CPD hours. Classes take place at the Canterbury campus at St Martin's Priory in North Holmes Road and cost £450 + VAT. A longer five-day mediation training course leading to a certificate in civil and commercial mediation is offered for the week from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Also approved by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Council and counting for 16 CPD hours, this programme is priced at £2,250 + VAT. For more details, contact course director Ben Waters by telephone to 01227 782253 or by email to [mediationclinic@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:mediationclinic@canterbury.ac.uk). Readers might like to know that Chamber member South East Mediation of Broadstairs offers a professional mediation service to companies and individuals throughout East Kent. For details, contact Dr John East by telephone to 01843 608105 or by email to [john@southeastmediation.org](mailto:john@southeastmediation.org).

## 16. The Real Power

Is it true that behind every successful man is a determined woman? You will have your own view. We have learned of one of the possible reasons for the success of one well-known personality. This story may well be apocryphal, but we leave that judgment to our good-looking, elegant and knowledgeable readers to decide. It concerns William Jefferson Blythe III, known to most of us today under his adopted surname as Bill Clinton. His formidable wife Hilary supported his bid for high political office and was as delighted as anyone when he was inaugurated as President of the United States in January 1993. However, whereas Bill was obliged to follow strict security and protocol in the weeks before he assumed office, Hilary took the opportunity to make the journey to Washington on her own by car in order to experience a few last weeks of freedom before the iron grip of the White House took hold. As she reached the border of her home state of Arkansas, she stopped for fuel, only to be accosted promptly by the garage hand who exclaimed: "Hilary, How are you? It's me Ralph. Don't you remember?" Shocked at the intervention and mindful of the warnings she had received from the secret service, she remained steadfastly silent. "You know me, Hilary Rodham, I'm Ralph. We walked out together at school at Maine East." Breathing a deep sigh of relief, Hilary Clinton relaxed and said: "Of course, Ralph, now I recognize you. It's great to see you. How are you doing?" Ralph replied with a smile: "I'm fine, Hilary. But just think. If you had married me, now you would be the wife of a gas attendant from Illinois". Hilary looked at him sharply, paid her bill and then said sternly: "Oh no, Ralph Scawsby. You've got it wrong, very wrong. If you had married me, now you would be President of the United States". Any ladies reading this will not need reminding of where the real power lies in our society.

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