



Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

21st October 2012 Issue No.: 196

1. Renewable Profits Renewable Energy Report

Last Friday in the magnificent setting of the recently refurbished BayPoint Club in Sandwich, Chamber members and their guests heard the latest news on the world's two largest offshore wind farms and received an update on developments in East Kent from some of the key decision-makers responsible for orchestrating the growth of our economy in the districts of Thanet and Dover. A delegation of 21 French business people joined the day's activities and discussed developing business links with Chamber members and their associates. Laura Sandys MP gave a keynote speech after lunch focussing on the opportunities in the area and the extensive government support available to ambitious companies wishing to take advantage of new government funding arrangements to support inward investors and East Kent firms looking to expand. Stephen Seabridge of McCabe Ford Williams ensured that the audience was aware of the simple steps required to start a company in the UK and the favourable tax regime that exists in comparison to many other European countries.

2. Who Started Speaking?

After an introduction and welcome from the Chamber Chief Executive, Cllr Paul Watkins took to the stage to speak to the packed audience. Drawing on his considerable experience of local government in Kent, the Leader of Dover District Council outlined some of the developments in the offing in the local area and emphasized the importance of our commercial and cultural ties with the French Channel Ports. Offering support to UK and French companies wishing to develop business in East Kent, he said that the incentives available to inward investors were considerable and promised every assistance to companies seeking to boost trade between France and England. The Economic and Regeneration Manager of Thanet District Council, Rob Hetherington, was the next to extend a welcome to all the delegates. He pointed to the improved road and rail links now in operation and the success of the Turner Centre which has attracted over 750,000 visitors since it opened in April 2011. Warming to his theme, Rob summarised the local attractions and the help that his council can extend to any company in the UK or France that wishes to improve its balance sheet through improving turnover from exports and imports. The Leader of Thanet District Council, Cllr Clive Hart, ably

supported by Cllr Iris Johnston of Margate, added his support to Rob's words so that our French visitors were left in no doubt that East Kent is united in wishing to work more closely with their nearest continental neighbours.

3. What About The Wind Farms?

In a late change to the published programme, the Head of UK Operations at Vattenfall Wind Power, Willen van Dongen, took to the podium and gave a detailed account of the current performance of Thanet Offshore Wind Farm. With a rather wistful acknowledgement that its position as the world's largest was being overtaken by its new neighbour the London Array, Willen nevertheless spoke cogently of the contribution of Vattenfall Wind Power to this nation's future energy needs and the continuing benefits accumulating to companies in East Kent since the official opening of the 100 turbine wind farm off the East Kent coast on 23rd September 2010. He said that he was delighted to be present and stressed that relations with local companies were vital to Vattenfall and had played a large part in the success of its projects throughout the UK. Although Melanie Rogers had been replaced as the Vattenfall presenter, both the Northern French and the East Kent coastal business community delegations gave her a huge round of applause when it was announced that she has every reason to attend a seminar on East Kent maritime matters as she is a former Dart 18 World Champion. In one of the most demanding sailing events for catamarans, for the past six years she has rarely been outside the top four in the world.

4. What's All This About A New Environmental Centre?

If the secret of good comedy is indeed timing, then Stewart Haywood could have a career on 'Have I Got News For You'. As Director of East Kent College's proposed Centre for Environmental Technologies, he was able to announce that planning permission had just been received and work was due to commence immediately with an opening date scheduled for September 2013. The new building will be on the main college campus on a plot of 2,832 m². Stewart gave further evidence of his ability to time his appearances appropriately when he related that was just adjusting to his new post at the college when one Wednesday the Principal tasked him with producing a master plan for a new Environmental Technology Centre "by Friday". Taking the practical view that it might be as well to know his ground before committing the £6 million funding, he paced out the ground floor of the site, marked the rooms required and duly produced his draft on time. With additions from professional designers, architects and planners, Stewart's sketch is essentially the building that students will occupy next year. Delegates were delighted to hear that East Kent will benefit from skills training in a broad range of environmental sectors; these are sunrise industries that promise bright careers for the area's youth and a promising future for East Kent's fastest growing Further Education College.

5. Aren't Tax Rates Going Up In France?

It is true that tax rates in France are projected to rise steeply next year, both income tax on high earners and Capital Gains Tax for companies. This may make East Kent attractive to French companies and perhaps help to balance the significant number of British businessmen and women who retire to live in France, attracted by the tales of Life In Provence and the availability of sizeable property at reasonable prices. Stephen Seabridge gave a presentation that set out the current tax rates in the UK and noted that this country scores quite highly against World Bank indices of business-friendly regimes. In the World Bank rankings to June 2011, the UK ranks 7th out of 183 in "the ease of doing business index". It may surprise many that the UK is rated first for "Getting Credit". France scores highly for "Enforcing Contracts", see <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings> for full details. Stephen sketched out the legal requirements to start an enterprise in the UK and the relatively low costs for registering a limited company at Companies House.

6. Didn't Any Of You Eat All Day?

The BayPoint Club provided a magnificent buffet lunch which appealed to all delegates, even the most fastidious eaters. Taking advantage of the spacious facilities available for corporate hire, lunch was provided in the room next to the main hall which looks out over the extensive playing fields. This was too good an opportunity to miss for Flying Fish Hovercraft. Aware that all the French business people attending and many

of the East Kent delegates had a professional interest in shipping and the maritime trade, Flying Fish gave a demonstration of their hovercraft. Designed and built in Sandwich, these vessels provide a cost-effective transport option for companies wishing to access offshore installations in double-quick time as well as offering a fun-filled experience on land or water for the more adventurous sailors. Telephone Emma or Russ to 01304 619820 for more details.

7. Chamber Co-President Speaks

With her green credentials beyond dispute, Laura Sandys MP opened the afternoon session. As Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Green Deal Group and Parliamentary Private Secretary to Greg Barker MP, Minister of State at the Department of Energy & Climate Change, Laura is fully committed to securing the best possible advantages to East Kent from our pre-eminence in wind farms and the advantages these bring in attracting allied industries to the area. Recognising the potential of the nearby Discovery Park, Laura spoke passionately of her government's determination to seek responsible sources of energy that bring associated benefits to the homes and businesses they serve.

8. DONG Energy

Our final speaker of the afternoon was Elias Dencker, Stakeholder Manager at DONG Wind (UK). As 50% shareholder in the London Array and with many other projects around the UK, Dong Energy expects to employ an additional 60 UK staff by the end of 2012. The company is the market leader in offshore wind energy with current installations producing 789 MW of electricity and a projected 1,113 MW under construction. Dong Energy claims to have invested £3 billion in UK offshore wind energy to date. Much of Elias's presentation highlighted the growth of the wind energy industry which he confidently expects to grow by 30% each year from 2011 to 2020, a remarkable projection in these current recessionary times: smart investors take note. Elias also detailed the benefits to local job creation. Whereas gas-fired power stations create one technician post per 105 MW generated, wind powered plants require ten times more employees, i.e. one technician per 10.5 MW generated. In questions afterwards, Elias responded to implied criticisms that local manufacturers were not providing the infrastructure for the wind turbines by saying that the costs for entering the industry were huge and are measured in billions. Local companies therefore tend to be recruited as sub-contractors in the construction phase and to service the installations when they have been built. In answer to a question about tidal power, he said that the technology has yet to be proven and that DONG Energy was awaiting further research before investing any significant sums. Dong Energy is planning to produce 85% of its energy output from renewable sources by 2040.

9. Discovery Park & New Ramsgate Ferry

At 1415 hrs, delegates divided into two groups. One party went to the Discovery Park to be greeted with an expert viewing of the facilities available on the former Pfizer site. The Discovery Park is removing many of the barriers and aggressive signage surrounding the 86 hectare compound. Security remains at a high standard, but there is no doubt that visitors in the future will not be viewed as potential industrial spies, but can expect a warm welcome to this world-class site. The trip to Ramsgate Harbour coincided with the announcement of a new fast ferry service between Ramsgate and Boulogne. A 102m trimaran has been chartered by Euroferries from Austal with a view to beginning a four times daily high speed service for passengers, cars and coaches beginning in February 2013. The ferry operators expect to offer an on-board 'in-seat' shopping service together with Wi-Fi Internet access and extensive catering. Also planned are dedicated coach links to Ramsgate station, Canterbury and London Victoria.

10. Which Companies Attended The Seminar?

The list of attendees includes delegates from the following ambitious organisations: Actemium, Chambre de Commerce Française de Grande-Bretagne, CLS Offshore, CMI Services, Dieppe Meca Energies, France Télécom Marine, G-Tec, Havre Développement, Heos Marine, In Vivo, Normandy Chamber Of Commerce, OG2S, Sames, Som Industrie, Thomas Services Maritimes, Vialog, Academy FM, Adecco, Anton Images, BayPoint Club, Blue Sky Solar, Boys & Maughan, Department for Business Innovation & Skills, Carole Peters Travel, China Gateway International, Dong Energy, Dover People's Port Trust Ltd, Dover District Council,

Dover District Chamber of Commerce, Dover Counselling Centre, East Kent Business Advice Clinic, East Kent College, Ferry Management Services Limited, Flambeau Europlast, Flying Fish Hovercraft, JumpStart, Kent Independent Security, Locate In Kent, Macallister White Solicitors, McCabe Ford Williams Chartered Accountants, Pôle Entreprises Internationales, Premier Framework Displays, Puls Global, Sota Solutions, Spain Brothers Chartered Accountants, Thanet & East Kent Chamber, Thanet District Council, Trews Workwear, Vattenfall, Western Union/Travelex, White's Transport, Zero Trace.

11. Golf Day

The 9th Annual Chamber Golf Day took place at Prince's Golf Club on Friday, 12th October 2012. Twenty-four teams of four players from East Kent companies competed for £30,000 of prizes in keenly fought competitions on this famous links course that was the venue for the 1932 Open Championship. Stableford Rules and the handicap system allowed high handicappers to measure themselves on a playing field that was not always level but was always fair. Despite some impressive performances from DFDS Seaways, Smye Rumsby and The Weights Room, Thanet regained the Chamber of Commerce Challenge Cup it had lost to Dover the previous year. First timers MCS Energy Systems triumphed as the top corporate team, closely followed by DFDS Seaways and OFP Timber Framed Homes. The top individual golfer was Neil Brennan who managed to stay ahead of Jason Smith, Bradley Ellison, Max Brackley and Tony Marsh. Max Brackley received ample compensation for his round of 68 by winning the much prized Ray Haines Memorial trophy, named after the late Chief Executive of the Dover District Chamber of Commerce. Other winners on the day were Charlie Brown, Alan Taylor, Nathan Lamb and Neil Brennan. The Dover Counselling Centre benefited from the proceeds of the charity hole, Manager Angie Wiggins expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the teams for their support for this organisation which was established following the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster in 1987. At the presentation in the club house afterwards, the Chamber Chief Executive thanked Prince's Golf Club, the fifteen sponsoring companies and all the players for their friendly rivalry and good natured spirit before adding some especial words of praise for tournament director Justin Bishop and Chamber organiser Graham Rayner. He added that plans are already in place for an even bigger tournament in 2013 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of what has become the largest corporate golf tournament in the East Kent coastal business community.

12. Which Companies Took Part And Who Were The Sponsors?

Those companies taking part in what Sir Winston Churchill called "a game whose aim is to hit a very small ball into an even smaller hole, with weapons singularly ill-designed for the purpose" enjoyed positive networking before, during and after the activity on the course; proving once again that golf is a sport that lends itself well to securing new customers, nourishing existing clients and discovering new opportunities in the local business community. The following teams took part: AEI Compounds, Barnes Marsland Solicitors, BayPoint Club, Bradstowe Chartered Surveyors, Carol Peters Travel, Country Carpets, DFDS Vikings, DFDS Drivers, DP Lead & Sons, East Kent College, GoKart Electric Golf, Hartman Marine, Kent Independent Security, M&S Group, MCS Energy Systems, NPS South East, OFP Timber Framed Homes A, OFP Timber Framed Homes B, Rail Civils & Construction, Smye Rumsby, The Weights Room, Vattenfall, Walpole Bay Hotel, Whites Transport. Sponsors for the day were All Sign Solutions, Anthony Tarchetti Pro, BayPoint Club, Coastal Data Systems, DFDS Seaways, DP Lead & Sons, GoKart Electric Golf, Golf Stream, OFP Timber Framed Homes, Online MBT, Puls Global, Sharp Printing Services, Sota Solutions, Vattenfall and Walpole Bay Hotel.

13. IT Progress

The Chamber is grateful to Mick Say of the OnLine Marketing Academy for regular updates on changes in search engines processes and Internet technology. We learn that Google will shortly be dropping parts of its service. Some users of the Google Places app or Classics Plus will no doubt now be feeling worse as these features will disappear soon. You may feel that if you have committed resources to redundant technologies that you will end up like your distant uncle who had a shed of Betamax tapes when everyone else had moved to VHS. When cassettes were dropped in favour of CDs, at least you could play the cassettes on your Sony Walkman. To future proof your IT purchasing decisions, have a word with the experts; it is what they do for a living. AI IT Web Design of Broadstairs tel: 01843 604664; Auratek of Broadstairs tel: 0845 652 2438; Coastal

Data Systems Ltd of Ramsgate tel: 01843 823324; ICC Services Limited of Deal tel: 01304 365200; InCloudOne Ltd of Sandwich tel: 01732 447859; Simtech Computer Systems Ltd of Margate tel: 01843 297652; Sota Solutions of Sittingbourne tel: 01795 413500; Speedie Consultants Ltd of Westgate on Sea tel: 01843 831088 and Symbolism Retail Ltd of Ramsgate tel: 01843 581826. Now, where did we leave that little bottle of Tippex?

14. Kent Coastal Week

We are grateful to Delphine Houlton of Chamber member Maxim PR for drawing our attention to Kent's Coastal Week flagship event at Ramsgate harbour on Sunday, October 28. Visitors to the London Array display near the Custom House, between 10am and 4pm, will be able to find out about the high-tech vessels being used to build the wind farm. There will also be opportunities to climb aboard one of the state-of-the-art crew vessels to talk to team members about the challenges of working in the outer Thames Estuary. There will also be children's activities reflecting a maritime theme. Over 50 events are planned for Kent's Coastal Week 2012, which starts on Saturday, October 27th and runs until Sunday, November 4th 2012. The activities are organised by Kent County Council and sponsored by the London Array and Southern Water with support funding from the European Union. Joanne Haddon, of London Array, said: "It is also a particular pleasure to be able to demonstrate how the Kent coast continues to be a valuable resource making a tremendous contribution to the economy through production of renewable energy and the sustainability of our communities and our environment." More information is available on the website at http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/countryside_and_coast/coast/kents_coastal_week.aspx or telephone 08458 247600.

15. Hartsdown & Cliftonville Primary Face Future Together

Chamber members Hartsdown Academy and Cliftonville Primary will be working together in the future to provide a new and smoother educational route for children from their first days at school to their final departure as school leavers. Under new Cliftonville Head Jane Troth, Cliftonville Primary is expected to continue its upward path with increased momentum. Overseeing the new arrangements as Executive Head of both schools will be Andy Somers who says: "Cliftonville is a good school and it is clear that the staff really care about the pupils in all stages of their education. Our role is to bring our expertise gained in our other roles in the area to guide Cliftonville onwards and upwards – it really does have a bright future, we have gathered that much in the few short weeks since the start of term." Andy Somers has an outstanding record at Hartsdown of working with the local business community and we wish him continuing success with his increased responsibilities.

16. Be Prepared

The Scout Association tells us that 92% of our young people have said that scouting helps them build good relationships and long-lasting friendships. Those readers old-fashioned enough to remember the distinctions between Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Cubs and Brownies will also know that the motto of every member of Baden Powell's Big Society Club is "Be Prepared". The same applies to pensions. We have received many enquiries in the last few weeks about the new arrangements for obligatory pensions. Unless your company has more than 120,000 workers, you were probably not obliged to have a qualifying pension scheme in place by the beginning of this month. If you have fewer than 50 workers in your firm, then the legal requirements should not impact on you until at least June 2015. However, that does not mean that you should not be prepared. The Chamber membership benefits from some excellent professional advisors who can ensure that you stay on the right side of the law, reward your workers appropriately and help to keep your business on an even keel in the face of incoming storms of financial legislation. We recommend one or more of the following: Burgess Hodgson of Canterbury tel: 01227 454627; Cleverdons Chartered Accountants of Broadstairs tel: 01843 866599; JHL Accountants Ltd of Dover tel: 01304 216296; Kemp's Accounting Solutions Ltd of Broadstairs tel: 01843 861188; Levicks Chartered Accountants of Broadstairs tel: 01843 862716; Neville Weston of Ramsgate tel: 01843 594571; Reeves & Co LLP of Canterbury tel: 01227 768231; Regency Independent Financial Advisers of Dover tel: 01304 213902; Spain Brothers & Co of Dover tel: 01304 201994;

Michael Martin Partnership Ltd of Whitstable tel: 01227 770500; County Financial Services Ltd of Birchington tel: 01843 265070 and Joseph Bevan Partnership of Dover tel: 01304 240003.

17. How Are We Doing?

The full figures for September 2012 show that unemployment in the Dover District has fallen by 4.9% since the previous month, confirming a positive trend for the current quarter. Year-on-year figures for Dover still show a decline in employment of 1.9%. In Thanet, there has been a 1.1% monthly fall in joblessness since August 2012, although the number of registered unemployed is still 4.8% above the total for September 2011. The number of unemployment benefit claimants in the age bracket of 18 to 24 year olds remains a vivid concern at 8.8% in the Dover District and 14.2% in Thanet against 6.8% in Kent as a whole and just 3.1% in Canterbury, revealing yet again the benefits of a strong retail sector and the value of High Education institutions; Canterbury has three universities within its boundaries. Dover Harbour board continues to shed posts, but reports from manufacturing companies in Dover and Thanet are uniformly optimistic. On balance, we are seeing some welcome signs of recovery which we expect to see reflected in the annual differences in the East Kent unemployment figures before the end of the year. Butlers and chauffeurs in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells can be relatively confident that the serving of dry sherries and the polishing of limousines may continue unabated as the employment prospects remain bright in their districts which have the lowest unemployment levels in the county at 1.7% and 1.6% respectively.

18. Give Us The Facts

We are grateful to the ever excellent Kent County Council's Business Research department for the following figures which are reproduced under the terms of our own click-use License no. C2010000980.

	September 2012		Change since Sep 2011	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Thanet District	4,806	6.1%	+219	+4.8%
Canterbury District	2,381	2.4%	+29	+1.2%
Dover District	2,477	3.8%	+47	+1.9%
Ashford	1,949	2.7%	+61	+3.2%
Maidstone	2,406	2.5%	-41	-1.7%
Shepway	2,663	4.3%	+67	+2.6%
Swale	3,318	3.9%	+52	+1.6%
Kent	35,037	3.3%	-280	-0.8%
South East	134,136	2.5%	-6,239	-4.5%
Great Britain	1,488,740	3.8%	-28,457	-1.96%

19. Short Of Words? Read Milton

As a general rule, it is in our interests in East Kent to welcome free markets, reduced regulations and a more liberal exchange of goods, services and ideas. The recent Leveson enquiry highlighted the perils of unrestricted media intrusion into the private lives of individuals. Calls for a limited form of censorship have understandably been treated with caution by the main political parties. Their leaders are probably aware of the past history of censorship. Apart from exceptional provisions in times of war, British newspapers are traditionally relatively free to investigate wrong doing and report on subjects which embarrass the administration of the day. It was not always thus. The poet John Milton wrote a famous plea for press freedom in 1644. It took another 51 years for his reasoning to be heeded. One sentence of his inspired *Areopagitica* is worth recalling: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Milton was not only a great poet, but he is credited with inventing more English words than any other person including Shakespeare, who ranks a humble fourth. Where would our description of the recession be without recourse to Milton's "pandemonium" and our tabloid newspapers without "debauchery" and "depravity"? How would our estate agents cope without "terrific" or the X-factor without "stunning" or even "enjoyable?" Perhaps Milton's greatest contribution was to emphasize the spiritual value of hope. So,

when you see your next set of quarterly figures, however depressing or worrying they may be, remember two more of Milton's contributions to our language: "All is not lost" and "Every cloud has a silver lining".

20. Hollywood Dreams

As we approach the pantomime season, our thoughts turn to the glories of live theatre. Happiness and sadness are the currency of actors and it was no surprise to receive the following account from one Chamber member who regularly features in amateur productions at Christmas time. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to readers to judge for themselves. "It was five or six years ago when it happened. In fact, it must have been more than that because digital cameras had not yet appeared in the shops. Anyway, we were putting on a production of Snow White and our leading lady, a shop girl in her day job, was hoping to use her starring role as a springboard for getting into films in Los Angeles. She was certainly pretty enough and was without doubt a brilliantly talented actress, but she just had not had the breaks and that bit of luck that we all need from time to time. We only had a short run of two weeks, but the audiences were flocking to the show and she was the chief attraction; so much so that on our last night we were fully booked with a reserve list of over one hundred in case of no shows. This was almost unheard of outside the West End at the time and shows just what an attraction our Snow White was. In order to give her the best chance, we organised for a professional photographer to take her picture throughout the evening so that she would have a portfolio to take with her to Hollywood. The final night's production was a huge success and the photographer recorded all the action throughout the evening, promising to send Snow White the pictures the very next day. After the closing night's party, we all said our goodbyes and looked forward to reading about our Snow White winning BAFTAs and Oscars awards for her acting within a short time. It was around four years later when I saw Snow White again. She was behind the counter in a shop in Broadstairs. Surprised to see her back in her old job when a career in Hollywood had beckoned so strongly, I asked her what had happened. Slightly tearful, she said that she had based all her hopes on using the photographs of that final night of our pantomime as an introduction to casting directors and producers, but the photographs had never arrived. Shocked at this since we had paid a considerable sum to the photographer, I said that I would investigate. Somewhat wistfully and resigned to her fate, she just said, "That's kind of you, but in my own mind I know that some day my prints will come".

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