



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

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

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2012 Issue No.: 199**

#### **I. Working With Thanet District Council**

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber welcomes a new understanding with Thanet District Council (TDC) following the signing of a 'Memorandum of Understanding' that signals a strong commitment to supporting local business. It will run for three years and gives council recognition that TEKC is the largest representative of local business. Underpinned by the MoU are mutual interests such as the growth of the local economy, inward investment and job creation. Details laid down include a council undertaking to consult with TEKC when developing policies and major initiatives that seek to promote the area's growth. In response to this, TEKC has agreed to provide the council with regular feedback on commercial issues and to give its backing to jointly agreed policies and initiatives. Both parties have pledged to liaise over initiatives to encourage new businesses and to back existing firms operating within the district. TEKC will give public endorsement to council measures designed to promote the business community. In an extra boost to the local economy, the MoU commits the council and TEKC to supporting activity that provides advice to commercial organisations. The document also heralds joint working on promoting the area to inward investors and encouraging start-up businesses. Regular contact between the council and TEKC will strengthen all the aims and objectives of the two organisations as they work towards helping the local business community. Leader of Thanet District Council, Cllr Clive Hart, said: "The council and TEKC are both dedicated to supporting the local economy through job creation, business promotion and attracting inward investment. As the largest business support agency in Thanet, TEKC has an intimate knowledge of the needs of the local private sector, and we're very happy to have forged such a strong and effective relationship. The Memorandum of Understanding represents a tangible and auspicious pledge to the local economy and the people of Thanet." TEKC Chief Executive David Foley said: "This agreement marks a significant step forward in strengthening the links between the democratically elected local government body representing the district and the largest business support organisation. We look forward to working together to promote local companies, to

ease the growing pains of start-ups and to attract inward investment for the benefit of all companies, workers and residents.”

## **2. Thanet Skills Studio**

The Chamber was happy to be represented at the opening of the newly refurbished Thanet Skills Studio (TSS) at Westwood, near Margate earlier this month. Kent County Council Leader Paul Carter, a noted classic car and race enthusiast, was a picture of unconcealed delight as he cast an expert eye over the brand new Caterham sports car available to engineering students studying at TSS. In a short speech before the official opening ceremony, Cllr Carter emphasized the need to align vocational education closely with the practical skills that businesses require. As he put it: “The more we do to link the business, education and public sectors, the better.” Hartsdown Academy is the lead partner in the project and executive head Andy Summers was clear and concise about the main objective of TSS. He said: “Thanet Skills Studio is all about one simple, clear and very important ideal – developing real skills for real jobs.” There is no doubt that TSS is a splendid project that bridges the gap between school and the world of work which is essential if we are to support a vibrant economy in East Kent. Chamber members with an interest in visiting TSS to see this excellent initiative for themselves are invited to telephone 01843 233130 or to email [info@ThanetSkillsStudio.co.uk](mailto:info@ThanetSkillsStudio.co.uk) to arrange a visit.

## **3. Not Just Pens & Key Rings**

New Chamber member DATI is offering free delivery on orders over £500 from a range of over 20,000 promotional products which include standard items such as mouse mats, key rings and printed pens but also extend to 5,000 brandable garments, 3D glasses, watches and an intriguing category of ‘relaxation sets’. Based in Westbrook Kent, the birthplace of the late but much lamented Kent cricketer Richard Davies, DATI delivers nationwide and welcomes enquiries to its sales office by email to [sales@dati.co.uk](mailto:sales@dati.co.uk) or by telephone to 01843 835213.

## **4. East Kent Business Advice Clinic**

A full list of delegates attended December’s East Kent Business Advice Clinic (EKBAC). Established in March 2011 to replace the defunct regional programme of Business Link, EKBAC has now welcomed nearly 130 people to its monthly sessions in Broadstairs and Dover. Offering advice from senior lawyers, chartered accountants, bank managers and seasoned industry professionals, the clinics allow any company trading in East Kent to receive bespoke guidance in complete confidence and without charge. Unlike the Dragon’s Den format, the panel of advisors are not in the business of boosting their own bank balances or proving to the world now clever and successful they are. The EKBAC panellists have all been eminently successful in their own careers and are now happy to support the economy that has nourished them so well. Appointments can be made by email to [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line “East Kent Business Advice Clinic”.

## **5. Labradors Wanted**

A Chamber member is anxious to find nine Labradors aged six months to two years for training as working dogs. A successful transaction could lead to further orders on a larger scale with associated business opportunities. Please send any offers by email to [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line “Labrador dogs”.

## **6. Airlines Banned in EU**

We are grateful to Paul Twyman, Chairman of Kent International Airport Consultative Committee, for an update on airlines banned from flying in EU airspace. Subject to a disclaimer that states that absence from the list does not imply acceptable safety standards since “it is not possible to check all aircraft that land at each Community airport”, Chamber members might like to take into account the names of the airlines listed when they book their next holiday or business trip. The European air safety list was updated earlier this month and includes all carriers certified in countries whose operations are fully banned in the European Union. The airlines banned are based in Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mozambique, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Sudan, Swaziland and Zambia. All but six carriers in Indonesia are banned, as are all but three in Gabon and all but one in Kazakhstan. If you enjoy wading through European legislation or simply have difficulty in getting to sleep at night, the official journal of the European Union dated 5<sup>th</sup>

December 2012 will interest you, particularly “Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1146/2012 of 3 December 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 474/2006”. For the rest of us, a handy list is available on-line at [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/air-ban/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/air-ban/index_en.htm). It remains a mystery why one airline in Mozambique chose to call itself ETA Air Charter. Regular readers will know that companies with international aspirations have to be careful not to select company or product names with pejorative connotations. An airline that shares its name with a proscribed Basque paramilitary group might be at something of a disadvantage when marketing its services in Madrid and Paris.

## **7. Thanet & Dover Surcharge**

For nearly five years, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber has monitored the surcharge levied on fuel sold in Thanet. The price difference between Tesco Extra in Broadstairs and Asda in Canterbury has now widened to a record 4.2p on a litre of unleaded petrol. Motorists buying fuel at Asda Canterbury pay 128.7p a litre whereas Tesco Extra in Broadstairs charges 133.9p. The deal for motorists near Dover is not much better with the cheapest unleaded petrol available costing 132.9 a litre. Businesses will consider this surcharge to be an unwelcome addition to their costs at a time when East Kent firms are recovering from recession. Our Chamber members would rather spend the money on employing more staff than adding to the profits of rich oil companies and well-resourced supermarket chains. “You get what you pay for” may be true in many commercial transactions, but when it comes to petrol in the Thanet & Dover districts it appears that you get between 3% and 4% less for your hard-earned money.

## **8. Governors Resigned**

One Kent school was in the news last week when it might have preferred to have been mentioned in dispatches for its nativity play, successes on the sports field or closure due to icy conditions. The inclement weather surrounding Sherwood Park Community Primary School in Tunbridge Wells resulted from the resignation of all the governors, including Chairman Reverend Brian Stephen Senior, following the revelation that £6,000 had been spent on a leaving party for the outgoing headteacher. Many readers will sympathize with Kent County Councillor James Tansley’s criticism of the school for allegedly frivolous spending when budgets for teaching materials and essential maintenance are under such pressure. But, we must remember that school and college governors are in the main some of the most community minded individuals in our society. They offer their free time, skills and experience without reward for the benefit of young people in their area. It is quite right that the governors should be held to account for the bodies over which they preside, but we must be careful not to make these voluntary posts so uncomfortable that suitable candidates will not come forward to fill the many vacancies available. There is a case for business expertise to be better represented and for governors to receive more training in exercising scrutiny, but this Chamber believes that it would be quite wrong to vilify any governing body for mistakes of judgment honestly made and openly accepted. Kent County Council has fulfilled its duty in highlighting an unacceptable situation and the governors in question have made the honourable decision to resign; good decision-making on both counts. As for the future, it might well be the case that these chastised governors are now better informed, more enlightened and potentially more useful than was previously the case. The private sector tends to recognise experience gained from past error when it can add significant value to future decision-making, as Richard Branson and James Caan would undoubtedly verify. Of course, such scandals and criticisms are off the menu as we celebrate the business-minded practices and good financial management of the following schools and colleges in East Kent: Astor College, Barton Junior School, Cliftonville Primary School, Dover College, Dover Federation for the Arts, Dover Grammar School for Boys, Dover Grammar School for Girls, East Kent College, Hartsdown Technology College, Marlowe Academy, Ripplevale School Ltd, Shatterlocks Nursery and Infant School, Saint Lawrence College and White Cliffs Primary College for the Arts.

## **9. Seven Oak Dragons**

The provision of a Park & Ride facility at Manston Airport to take shoppers to Westwood Cross Shopping Centre should help to relieve some of the congestion as we approach the busiest season for retailers. Among the crowds looking for presents at WH Smith, Primark, Marks & Spencer and other blue-chip brand outlets will be a temporary stall selling books about the adventures of two young dragons; Oak who loves balloons and Acorn who loves football. Local writer Richard Hill has created some delightful tales in the best traditions of children’s literature. Young minds will delight at the characters, gentle story lines and beautiful illustrations. There is not a mention of X-Factor, Strictly

Come Dancing or the National Lottery, but Ramsgate and Broadstairs harbour do feature as Oak and Acorn are joined by the green dragon Kelpy who loves to recycle and Nano who is unique as a skateboarding dragon. Let's admit it, you don't see many skateboarding dragons these days. Signed first editions will be available at Westwood Cross Christmas Market from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

## 10. Thanet Air Show

What promises to be one of Kent's major tourism events in 2013 is the Thanet Air Show scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2013. Organised and administered by Chamber member AS Enterprises, the show will present prime opportunities to showcase local companies before an audience of key corporate decision-makers as well as the general public. With up to 18,000 visitors expected, promotional packages cover a wide variety of budgets from a mention in one of the many booklets and brochures to prime location banners and the possibility of sponsoring the Red Arrows or the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. The Chamber has already received enquiries from the owners of Messerschmitts keen to provide a display on the day. We will update Chamber members on developments but all readers are invited to contact Managing Director Angela Sutton direct by email to [sutton.angela@gmail.com](mailto:sutton.angela@gmail.com). Anyone who doubts Angela's ability to manage such a large scale event should take note of the words of her former colleague in the RAF, Wing Commander Shaw, who states: "Angie is a superb event and project manager and able to work within a complicated multi-stakeholder environment. Ever the consummate professional, her attention to detail, communication skills and work ethic enhances any venture she is associated with." It doesn't get much better than that.

## 11. How Are We Doing?

The latest unemployment statistics show a significant improvement in Kent and Medway as a whole with just the districts of Ashford and Thanet showing a growth in unemployment since November last year. The star performer in job creation over the past twelve months is Tunbridge Wells where the jobless total has fallen by 11.5%. Although just two fewer people in Sevenoaks have registered as unemployed since last month, the annual decline in unemployment of 8.5% must be encouraging news for the butlers, chauffeurs and posh people in the leafy lanes of one of the South East's more wealthy areas. It can be argued that the economy of East Kent is heading in the right direction. The rate of annual increase in unemployment in Thanet has halved from the +9.8% revealed in the figures for August 2012 to the present +4.8% just 3 months later. In the same period, the Dover District has shown some remarkable gains from an annual increase of a whopping +10.8% to a decline registered for November 2012 of 0.8%. Exactly 100 more people in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and the surrounding villages are going home now with a wage packet than was the case last August. For East Kent, the figures show that compared to three months previously, 390 more adults in Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet are facing tidings of comfort and joy this Christmas with a job. If the current trend continues, then it is likely that early in the New Year the official employment figures for Kent should show significant annual job gains in every district in the county.

## 12. Give Us The Facts

Unemployment in East Kent

	November 2012		Change since Nov 2011	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%
Thanet District	4,835	6.1%	+221	+4.8%
Ashford	1,958	2.7%	+53	+2.8%
Canterbury District	2,230	2.2%	-73	-7.6%
Dover District	2,504	3.9%	-19	-0.8%
Maidstone	2,472	2.6%	-18	-0.7%
Shepway	2,660	4.3%	-46	-1.7%
Swale	3,348	4.0%	-33	-1.0%
Kent	34,726	3.3%	-994	-2.8%
South East	133,193	2.4%	-5,766	-4.1%
Great Britain	1,471,658	3.8%	-27,725	-1.8%

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### **13. My First Home**

Our good friends at the Thanet Gazette are looking for candidates to take part in their My First Home feature. Chamber members accepting the invitation will have the opportunity to mention their business and perhaps generate some publicity for their company as well as for their judicious choice of a home. If you would like to take part, you will need to send a few sentences about your first home describing when you moved in, the price of the property, what is your dream home and so on. Shy retiring wall flowers who prefer to read newspapers rather than be in them may not have the same enthusiasm as others who will relish the opportunity to see themselves in print. For more details, email [newsdesk.thanet@krmmedia.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk.thanet@krmmedia.co.uk) with the subject line "Mt First Home". If you prefer to telephone, call 01843 578150.

### **14. EuroKent Office To Let**

New Chamber member Marine Software Ltd has a small office to let at EuroKent Business Park. Operations Manager Mark Jennings informs us that: "It is important to highlight that as this office is under a rateable value of £6,000, the 2012/2013 business rates are zero and I believe the government also extended in the Autumn statement the zero extension for business rates the 2013/2014 tax year." Located at 3 Ozengell Place CT12 6PB, this modern ground floor office of 625 square feet is available for an annual rent of £7,500 plus a management charge of £825. All prices are subject to VAT. There is parking on site with easy access for vehicles of all sizes. The property is rated for use as an office, for light industry and for storage, i.e. B1, B2 and B8 respectively. For more information, contact Mark direct by telephone to 01304 840009 or by email to [emailinfo@marinesoftware.co.uk](mailto:emailinfo@marinesoftware.co.uk) with the subject line "Office at EuroKent".

### **15. The Power Of Senior Management**

The demise of Comet last month with the potential loss of over 6,000 jobs has thrown into sharp perspective the issue of gift vouchers, guarantees and customer rights: all of which are pertinent to the account recently received from one Chamber member. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to readers to judge for themselves. As our venerable company owner put it: "It was my wife's idea or 'senior management', as I call her. She said we needed a new toaster. She was very specific. 'I want a good quality one, mind and not one of those cheap, flimsy jobs that don't last five minutes'. Wishing to preserve domestic harmony and mindful that my future breakfasts could be in jeopardy, I was determined to get the best one I could find. Accordingly, somewhat frazzled, I went to the posh department store. I asked for the best one in stock and was directed towards their highest price toaster on display. When I asked the store manager if it was genuinely of the quality required, he told me: 'It should be, sir. We can offer you a lifetime guarantee'. Reassured, I parted with my £125 and took it home to my grateful wife who then kept me in toast for the next six months. Then disaster struck. The toaster gave up the ghost with a spectacular flash that menaced the marmalade and could have burnt the house to cinders. Before my dearest could say the word, I flew out of the house with the offending article and receipt and took it directly to the store. The same manager was on duty. Indignant at the failure, I said to him. 'Look, I paid £125 for this toaster and now it has failed after just a few months. It's just not good enough'. 'He looked at me for a moment and then said: 'Ah yes, I remember. It was last January, wasn't it?' 'Yes it was,' I said, 'perhaps a little more than six months, but you told me that it had a lifetime guarantee'. He replied slowly and calmly: 'Ah yes sir, but on the day you bought it, you did look terribly sick.'"

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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)

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