



Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

20th January 2013 Issue No.: 2013

1. Opportunity Knocks for East Kent Companies

Chamber members will recall from previous editions of this business bulletin that the 297-acre Discovery Park is now under new ownership with the promise of a minimum of 3,000 jobs in the next four years. With the final total to be possibly double that figure, there are clearly opportunities for East Kent companies to market their products and services to the owners and tenants on site. The Thanet & East Kent Chamber and its sister body the Dover District Chamber of Commerce have reached an official agreement with the senior management of the Discovery Park to promote liaison with the East Kent business community. With this in mind, the Discovery Park has joined the Chambers. As a result, local companies are invited to meet key decision-makers and buyers of Discovery Park Ltd at a special Chamber Business Networking Breakfast next month.

2. Sounds Wonderful, How Do I Book?

The Chamber Business Networking Breakfast will take place in Sandwich on Friday 15th February 2013. The session will include a briefing on the latest plans and objectives of the Discovery Park together with an introduction to its purchasing policies and the potential benefits for local companies. There will be ample time for networking and questions. The event will take place in Sandwich beginning at 0730 hrs and will finish just before 0900 hrs. Booking is essential. The price of £12 for Chamber members includes a full English breakfast with a vegetarian option. To reserve

your place, email admin@tekco.uk with the subject line "Discovery Park Breakfast 15 February 2013". There are a limited number of places for non-members.

3. More Details Please

Readers of issue no. 191 of the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 5th August 2012 will be aware that the owners of the Discovery Park have an impressive record of regenerating commercial property sites having transformed the former Samsung site in Billingham. Local companies there are currently enjoying a boom time which has seen the area transformed from the misery of 450 jobs lost when Samsung closed its operations to the current state of rude health. Trading as Wynyard Park, the Billingham site now has over 60 companies taking advantage of the modern facilities billed as "An ideal location offering fantastic opportunities for businesses of all sizes" and "in a prime location with excellent transport links". If Billingham is ideal, then the Discovery Park must surely rank one level higher; being closer to the EU, closer to London, at the end of the UK's fastest rail service and within a few miles of Manston Airport and the Dover and Ramsgate ferries. Support from officialdom suggests that there will be relatively few bureaucratic hurdles awaiting inward investors. Paul Watkins, Leader of Dover District Council, has already stated publicly: "We welcome the commitment that Discovery Park Limited has made to the long term future of the site." Similarly, Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council, has every confidence in the Discovery Park directors: "I expect them to be successful in meeting their target for creating 3,000 new jobs at Discovery Park, in East Kent." Although the site is located just over its border, Thanet District Council fully appreciates the advantages a successful regeneration of the former Pfizer site could bring to Thanet. The Draft Economic Strategy for Thanet notes the excellent road and rail links available and adds authoritatively: "The facilities at Discovery Park in Sandwich provide research and development infrastructure that is second to none". Chamber Co-President, Sir Roger Gale MP, paid a handsome tribute to his fellow Chamber Co-President, Laura Sandys MP, in praising her successful efforts to secure Enterprise Zone status for the site. As he put it: "Faced with the loss of thousands of Pfizer-based and dependent jobs in her constituency as a result of the firm's decision to re-locate most of its business, Laura has harnessed a huge amount of effort and political goodwill in her successful endeavour to persuade the Government that East Kent should host one of relatively few Enterprise Zones."

4. Media Watch

The Chamber featured in a BBC Radio Kent broadcast of yesterday which focussed on a remarkable campaign to build an Ice Rink in Thanet. Within 24 hrs of launching her Facebook page, organiser Rachel Harvey received over 1,000 messages of support. The current total is now over 9,000. The Chamber has already received some expressions of interest in building such an all-year round tourist facility and we will be happy to contribute to a business plan that might attract a suitable investor, help to locate the land and assist in finding the appropriate operator. Our good friends at BBC Radio Kent will keep the broadcast online until 25th January 2013, click on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p013gf79> and fast forward to 2:22:20. The Chamber's contribution starts at 2:25:40 with mentions for Chamber members Discovery Park, Turner Centre, Shepherd Neame and Manston Airport. The optimistic outlook for the Thanet District is reflected in some recent good news in the neighbouring Dover district which encompasses Sandwich and Deal. The Dover Express carried a positive story about business start-ups, see <http://www.thisiskent.co.uk/Hundreds-firms-start-Dover/story-17816348-detail/story.html> The increased number of start-up companies in the district recorded by the National Office for Statistics must be music to the ears of the Dover

District Chamber of Commerce President, Charlie Elphicke MP. It certainly echoes reports from the East Kent Business Advice Clinics which the Dover and Thanet Chambers host. The Dover District Chamber of Commerce was established in 1850 and is therefore well-qualified to take a long-term view of developments in the local economy. It is thus with an historical perspective on recoveries following previous recessions that the Dover Chamber Chief Executive is quoted as saying: "As confidence returns we will expect more people to consider starting up a company in the area."

5. More Sag Aloo Please

One start-up that is confident of its investment is the Masala Gate restaurant at 10 Duke Street in Margate CT9 1EP. A six-figure sum was spent on the refurbishment of the building and this is immediately evident in the restored plaster work that adorns the ceiling and walls of the dining area. Owner and Manager Mahbub Hossain is so confident of the long-term success of the restaurant that he is offering a 50% discount on food to Chamber members eating there before 28th February 2013. To book your table, telephone 01843 228877. Please bring with you your 2013 Chamber Diary or a copy of this business bulletin. Mahbub tells us that the ingredients in his curries bring some serious health benefits. "Turmeric has been found to reduce the risk of developing prostate, breast, skin and colorectal cancer, possibly because of its antioxidant properties." He adds: "Another benefit of the turmeric in curry is a reduced risk for Alzheimer's Disease and dementia." Mahbub emphasises how you can feel and look healthier after a regular intake of Indian dishes as they are "rich in antioxidants, which can help improve the appearance of your skin and help prevent the negative cosmetic effects of long-term exposure to pollutants or smoke."

6. It's Snowing; Must I Pay My Absent Staff?

We are advised by ACAS that "Employees are not automatically entitled to pay if unable to get to work because of bad weather". Of course, good employers will take into account the particular circumstances of their staff and recognise the benefits of being understanding in extreme weather conditions. ACAS gives some useful advice on its website at http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2797&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=SE+email+newsletter+2013&utm_content=SE+email+newsletter+2013+CID_643609dbe94d09c502473812aa191f7d&utm_source=Acas%20South%20East%20Email%20Marketing%20Live&utm_term=View%20guidance%20online For more detailed guidance on your legal position, contact one of the following specialist firm of solicitors who will give you chapter and verse on what the law allows you to do and how you might avoid the time, trouble and tribulations of the dreaded Employment Tribunal: Barnes Marsland of Margate tel: 01843 221466; Boys & Maughan of Birchington, Broadstairs, Margate and Ramsgate tel: 01843 234000; Gardner Croft of Canterbury tel: 01227 813400; Girlings of Ashford, Canterbury, Herne Bay and Margate tel: 01843 220274; Macalister White of Ramsgate tel: 01843 572789; Mowll & Mowll of Dover tel: 01304 873344.

7. Problems With Wheatbags

If you have never had a problem with a wheatbag, you should count your blessings. Kent Fire & Rescue Service has contacted the Chamber with a warning following an incident in Maidstone. We learn that: “A resident at Crispin Court, Coxheath near Maidstone, mistakenly overheated his wheatbag, leading to charring and large quantities of smoke which set off his smoke alarm.” According to the local Fire Station Manager Paul Ramsden: “While the gentleman was not injured and there was no damage to the microwave, it doesn't take much to see how a far more serious fire could have developed.” Apart from the momentary thrill of being called a gentleman, the individual concerned must have been relieved at his narrow escape. Similar incidents have occurred in Surrey and Sussex. Paul recommends “Do not use your wheat bag as a bed warmer.” Kent Standards has circulated details of a product recall notice for a Morphy Richards electric blanket model number 75312. It seems that these days a good old-fashioned hot water bottle or a good old-fashioned spouse is a preferable companion at night. Anyone who doubts the wisdom of this conclusion is welcome to seek confirmation from the Fire Service itself which can be found on the website at <http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/default.aspx?page=1391> where you can also hear an account of a fire in Broadstairs and a father saying: “My son is only alive because of the smoke alarms”. It makes you think, doesn't it?

8. Ecobuild 2013

Building companies, estate agents, surveyors, architects and anyone involved in the green economy might have an interest in the Ecobuild exhibition scheduled to run for three days from 5th March 2013 at ExCel London. As well as showcasing green products and services for the construction sector, the event hosts a conference with a programme sanctioned by advisors from the UK Green Building Council, Marks & Spencer, Skanska, CPA, KPMG, Deloitte, Reading University and Quintain. For more information and a free entry ticket, see <http://www.ecobuild.co.uk>.

9. Children's Centres

Children's Centres and their future in Thanet will be the subject of a workshop to take place in Margate on the afternoon of 13th February 2013. We are grateful for the update to Kent County Council's Debee Beale who bears the title of Thanet District Children's Centres Manager. Anyone with a professional or personal interest in Children's Centres will be welcome to attend to give an opinion on local solutions and choices for Thanet. Debee can be reached by email to Debee.Beale@kent.gov.uk or by telephone to 0300 333 5627. More information is available on the website at

http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/childcare_and_early_education/childrens_centres/future_service_options_program.aspx

10. Developing Your Business

Martin White of Empowered Business has contacted the Chamber with news of his services to SMEs. He writes: “From identifying your business strengths to understanding your customers and creating the right business strategy to meet your objectives, Empowered Business uses proven business process to work with you to create bespoke business development solutions that drive your business forward in the marketplace.” Martin looks forward to meeting fellow Chamber members at the Chamber Business Networking Breakfast planned for 15th February 2013 but welcomes enquiries before then by email to martin@empoweredbusiness.co.uk or direct to his mobile, tel: 0776 826 7515.

11. Change of Fire Alarm Policy

We are grateful to Sacha Taylor for informing the Chamber of important changes from next April to the response policy of Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) regarding Automatic Fire Alarms. We are advised that: "From April 2013, any premises reporting an alarm sounding will be required to confirm to 999 staff that there is a fire, or signs of fire, before any firefighting response is sent." There are some exceptions for alarms in sheltered accommodation. We have learned that in the nine months to December 2012, "The service has seen a significant reduction in the number of false alarms since it introduced the first phase of the change in April 2012, which affected calls to AFAs activated during daytime hours (6 am to 6pm). A third of the total number of calls the service received were previously from automatic systems and over 98% of these were false alarms. Since we stopped attending these alarms during the day, on nearly 1400 occasions, fire engines were available for genuine emergencies rather than being out dealing with false alarms". More information is available direct from KFRS, tel: 01622 692121.

12. Alzheimer's Breakthrough

Chamber member Dr Fiona Sherriff informs us of a breakthrough in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. A group of researchers from Université Laval, CHU de Québec and pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline has discovered a way to stimulate the brain's natural defence mechanisms in people with Alzheimer's disease. It is expected that this breakthrough will lead to the development of a vaccine to prevent the illness. As well as being a distinguished researcher herself into the operation of the brain, Fiona owns and manages The Property Tree, a company specialising in the leasing, rental and sales of residential and commercial property in Thanet. Fiona welcomes enquiries by telephone direct to her Margate office, tel: 01843 230786.

13. Digital Marketing

We are grateful to Rachel Knight of Chamber member Maxim, tel: 01892 513033, for sending us the text of an article by her colleague, Delphine Houlton, which analyses responses to digital marketing and finds some surprising data. Delphine concludes that "According to recent research by fast.MAP, brands concentrating on social media to get their messages across may well do better focusing on more traditional means of communication." Many Chamber members will be reassured that traditional marketing techniques may still have a use due to increasing resistance to more modern approaches. Delphine writes: "An increasing percentage of consumers are actively avoiding contact by digital routes with 79% of us closing website pop-ups unread. Three in five people ignore 'friending' requests on social media and 63% of consumers delete emails they receive from companies they have not heard of. When it comes to companies they have previously dealt with, however, consumers generally prefer email communication (57%) with direct mail coming in at 40%. Only 4% are happy to receive calls on their mobiles or messages via social media such as Twitter." Delphine adds that at the heart of successful marketing, there "has always been communicating with potential customers directly, engaging with their personal interests and at the right pace."

14. Commercial Energy Costs

We are again grateful to Martyn Young of Zero Trace Procurement, tel: 01 227 475506, for his expert commentary on power and gas prices. In a detailed email to the Chamber at the beginning of the month, he wrote of: “the impact of the US postponing the fiscal cliff, which had a bullish impact on energy contracts due to the subsequent rise in the oil price and the belief that the US will start to recover.” Martyn’s prophecy seems to be coming to pass with some clear signs of recovery in the US. For instance, General Electric has just reported a 22% rise in revenue from its units selling jet engines and a 14% increase in sales of oil and gas equipment. Rising energy costs have constituted a heavy burden for East Kent companies in recent years. The January 2013 Energy Report from our good friends at E.On points to high rises in year-on-year energy costs for commercial electricity and gas but a more encouraging fall from the previous month across the board.

15. The Facts About Energy Costs

Supply	Year		Month August 2012
	Dec 2011 - Dec 2012		
Average front month power contract price	13% higher		5% lower
Average front month gas contract price	18% higher		7% lower
Average front month oil contract price	1% higher		2% lower
Average Apr'13 Annualised power price	0% higher	Aug'12	2% lower
Average Oct'12 Annualised gas price	2% higher	Aug'12	2% lower

16. A Bigger Circulation

A tour guide from Folkestone has contacted the Chamber with a tale relating to a recent visit to the town by some professors from Poland. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to our readers to judge for themselves. While our tour guide was escorting these distinguished academics along the Leas with its splendid lawns and views of the English Channel, he stopped in front of a statue and announced proudly: “This is William Harvey, Folkestone’s most celebrated son. We have a hospital and a school named after him. He was born and went to school in Folkestone before training to become a physician. Nearly 400 years ago, he revolutionised medicine forever when he discovered the circulation of the blood. So, ladies and gentlemen, if you wake up tomorrow morning and find that the blood is still going around your body, you must say a quick ‘Thank you William Harvey’.” On hearing these words, the senior professor of the party remarked: “Just a moment young man. I am from Toruń in Poland. It is the birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus, Toruń’s most famous son. We have a university and a street named after him. He went to school in Toruń. Nearly 500 years ago, before your William Harvey, he revolutionised science forever when he discovered the true motion of the planets. So, Ladies and gentlemen, if you wake up tomorrow morning and find that the earth is still going around the sun, you must say a quick ‘Thank you, Nicolaus Copernicus’.” Each to their own, but on balance we think that the Polish professor may have got the better of this exchange.

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