



## Your Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

### Thanet & East Kent Insider

14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 Issue No.: 211

#### 1. Get a Share of £40 Million

The Thanet and Dover Chambers of Commerce will be hosting a Business Networking Breakfast on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 starting at 0730 hrs and finishing just before 0900 hrs. Chamber members will hear the latest news on how they can benefit from a £40 million investment in our local area. A wide range of suppliers in nearly every sector of our local economy stand to benefit from the construction, operations and future needs of this project. The price of £15 for Chamber members includes coffee on arrival and a full English breakfast with a vegetarian option. Booking is essential. To reserve your place, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line: "Get a Share of £40 Million". Full details of the venue near Sandwich will follow with confirmation.

#### 2. Contract Law & Your Business

All business undertaken in the UK today takes place within a framework of contract law. It is fair to state that if you do not understand the basics of contract law, you do not understand modern business. Furthermore, you are vulnerable to those that do. In a concentrated workshop of three hours, contract law expert Irfan Baluch of Cripps will brief you on how you can protect your business and safeguard your income by getting the best out of your contract negotiations and terms of trade. There will be time to raise specific issues related to your business." A fee of £70 for Chamber members includes all documentation. A Booking Form is attached. For more information, email [info@tekc.co.uk](mailto:info@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Contract Law Course 17 June 2015".

#### 3. Chamber Question Time

On Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber of Commerce hosted Chamber Question Time featuring the main four parliamentary candidates for the North Thanet constituency. After a full English breakfast in the executive suite of Margate Football Club, local business leaders posed questions to the panel of Sir Roger Gale MP (Con), Frances Rehal (Lab), George Cunningham (Lib Dem) and Piers Wauchope (UKIP). The discussions covered a wide range of substantive issues relating to the commercial health of the constituency. After each candidate had presented a short presentation of their ambitions and policies, the first question set the tone of animated debate with "Do you think the national media treats your party fairly". This was followed with questions on the public provision of WiFi, the future of Manston Airport, VAT on hotel accommodation, the reduction in UK armed forces and the performance of South Eastern trains. Such was the lively dialogue that ensued in the packed room, that there was not time to cover all the pre-submitted questions on matters such as assistance with EU contracts and public health. The panellists kindly stayed after the formal ending of Chamber Question Time to speak to individual businesses. In closing the debate, the Chamber Chief Executive thanked Bob Laslett and his team at Margate Football Club for their considerable financial investment in East Kent and the splendid hospitality provided. He also thanked the panel for their good-humoured responses and close attention to the concerns of local businesses.

## 4. How Are We Doing?

Although new unemployment data for March 2015 has not yet been released, a general trend can be seen clearly when February 2015 is compared with February last year and again with the same month two years previously. The official figures relate to the resident working age population of males and females aged 16 to 64 who are claiming Jobseekers Allowance and National Insurance Credits. Unlike the Exchange Rate and the Interest Rate, the Unemployment Rate acts as a reliable guide to the state of our local trading environment as well as providing a key regional and national economic indicator. The evidence shows that Kent has created over 21,000 jobs in the last two years with unemployment falling 57% across the county as a whole. Although East Kent districts cannot match the unemployment rates of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells, which have also more than halved since February 2013 and are now under 1%, a fall of between 42% and 49% in the four districts of East Kent equates to 5,800 adults now in a job or accredited training. Two and a half years ago in September 2012, youth unemployment in Thanet, Shepway and Dover was listed as an alarming 14%, 9.9% and 9.2% respectively. Although the current rates for 18 to 24 year olds of 6.8% in Thanet and 4.8% in Shepway and Dover do not merit a fanfare of trumpets, the trend is wholly positive and confirms the anecdotal evidence from Chamber members that some sectors of our East Kent economy are experiencing difficulty in finding suitable young people to assist with their increased production and growing order books.

## 5. Give Us The Facts

Unemployment

	February 2015		Change			
			Since Feb 2014		Since Feb 2013	
	Unemployed	% of workforce	Number	%	Number	%
Thanet District	2,920	3.6%	-1,355	-31.5%	-2,132	-42.2%
Dover District	1,533	2.3%	-630	-28.9%	-1,222	-44.4%
Canterbury	1,224	1.2%	-604	-33.0%	-1,197	-49.4%
Shepway	1,584	2.4%	-560	-26.1%	-1,249	-44.1%
Kent	15,870	1.7%	-6,954	-30.5%	-21,011	-57.0%
South East	69,349	1.3%	-32,802	-32.1%	-72,182	-51.0%
Great Britain	810,607	2.0%	-373,550	-31.5%	-736,978	-47.6%

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## 6. East Kent College

The leading local provider of Further Education courses, East Kent College maintains close links with the Chamber throughout the East Kent coastal business community. In March this, the college hosted a Chamber Question Time at its Folkestone campus in Shorncliffe Road followed earlier this month with a similar event in Broadstairs. With access to a network of over 1,000 active professionals, the Chamber invited a panel of business leaders from Shepway, Dover and Thanet to give their responses to questions from staff and students. Among the issues raised were the qualities the panelists looked for when employing young people, whether the UK should be a member of the European Union and if the BBC was correct in not renewing Jeremy Clarkson's contract to host Top Gear. Although not always in total agreement with each other, the panellists gave an invaluable insight into the qualities required to succeed in business and outlined what an ambitious company needs from its workforce in order to be successful in a competitive commercial environment.

## 7. Managing Your Money With Sage 50

If you want to know more about managing your money wisely, the Chamber is again offering a course for you or your trusted staff. The Sage Group has over 6 million customers and is the largest supplier of software to UK Small and Medium Enterprises. In liaison with Wilkins Kennedy, a Top 20 UK accountancy firm, chamber members are invited to attend a Sage 50 Accounts Course at beginner/refresher level. The session will take place at Discovery Park, Sandwich on 23rd April 2015. All participants who complete the course will receive a certificate of attendance. Topics covered include best practice in Invoicing, Receiving Payments from Customers, Credit Control, Invoicing Suppliers, Making Payments, Monitoring Debt, Bank Reconciliation, Vat Returns & Submissions, Financial Reports, Data Maintenance and Data Security. Suitable for any member of staff with an interest in maintaining accurate financial records, the course starts at 0930 hrs and lasts three hours. A fee of £70 for Chamber members includes a Sage manual, refreshments and all documentation. A Booking Form is attached. For more information, email [info@tekc.co.uk](mailto:info@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Sage Course 22 April 2015"

## 8. Chamber Diary 2016

We are pleased to advise you that the Chamber will again be organising its annual diary. The 2016 edition will continue in the same successful format as in 2015 with an alphabetical list of Chamber member companies together with an additional classified section. With the full participation of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, the diary

is now recognized as a definitive guide to the East Kent coastal business community. All Chamber members qualify for a basic entry. If you have changed any of your contact details recently, please advise the Chamber. Advertisements in the 2016 diary start from £200. For details, email [info@tekc.co.uk](mailto:info@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Chamber Diary 2016" and we will send you a full list of prices and a booking form. As in previous years, Graham Rayner will be contacting you to discuss how we can best promote your company through our publications and events.

## **9. Golf Day 2015**

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber and Dover District Chamber of Commerce will be organising our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Day to take place at the Royal St George's Golf Club in Sandwich on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015. We are again grateful to the management and staff at this great club for allowing our Chamber members to tread the fairways and dine in the Club House that has welcomed 14 Open Championships and every golfer of note including Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods and James Bond. The author of the Bond books is of course Ian Fleming. Less well-known is that he was an active member of Royal St George's and made this beloved links course the setting of the most famous golf match in fiction, that between Goldfinger and James Bond. For more information on the promotional opportunities for your company in this unique settings, email [info@tekc.co.uk](mailto:info@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Chamber Golf Day 2015" or telephone 01843 609289 or 01304 892484.

## **10. Chamber Conference**

The Annual Chamber Conference will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and will feature as keynote speaker the Chief Cashier of the Bank of England. In a post that dates from the foundation of the bank in 1694, the Chief Cashier today does much more than act as the sole signatory of the bank. The first Chief Cashier, John Kendrick, would have been surprised to see the signature on the £10, £20 and £50 banknotes issued since 3<sup>rd</sup> March this year, not least because Victoria Cleland is the first female ever to occupy this prestigious position. Her responsibilities include being the Director of Notes and ensuring that our banknotes are secure, available and of good quality. Her signature will appear on polymer £5 notes in the second half of next year. Any Chamber members who handle cash or who want to know more about the physical money in their pocket, should reserve the date of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015. More details of other speakers and sponsors will follow in subsequent editions of this business bulletin.

## **11. East Kent Port Traffic**

The Dover District Chamber of Commerce can trace its origins to 1850, the year when the first telegraph cable was laid from Dover to France. Through the Victorian era to the present day, the Chamber has supported business and trade under a variety of political regimes and economic cycles. The Chamber's archives chartered key economic issues and events of the last 165 years including Louis Blériot's cross-channel flight of 1909, the quicker non-stop return flight the next year by Charles Rolls, two world wars, the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster of 1987, the Deal bombing of 1989, the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 in direct competition to Dover's Cross Channel ferries and the current debate surrounding the management of the Port of Dover, see attached. Chamber members with an interest in transport and maritime trade will be interested in the annual report of the Dover Incorporated Chamber of Commerce for 1914, published under the presidency of Alfred C Leney. Written three months after the outbreak of WWI, the report acknowledged the critical stage "in our Empire's welfare" and the need to work "unceasingly for the promotion of commercial interests with the view to retaining in this country and the colonies much of the trade that has hitherto gone to Germany and Austria." In the 12 months of peacetime to 30 June 1914, Ocean Liner traffic at Dover is listed as 152 vessels with 1,814 passengers landed and a slightly higher number embarked. The highest value imports at the ports of Dover, Deal and Sandwich were cotton and woollen goods which together with other textiles accounted for over half of the cargos by value. The highest value export was classified as Parcel Post. It is interesting to note that our exports of Arms, Ammunition and Military and Stores from East Kent ports grew from £42,000 in 1912 to nearly £92,000 in 1913; but, somewhat amazingly, these were dwarfed by the value of our exports of ornamental feathers which peaked at £221,000 in 1912. All this was to change completely as Alfred C Leney stated in his pithy introduction: "It is with much regret that we record the closing of the Port for commercial purposes, which must entail heavy losses on many of our members until the war is over". Even when facing horrendous losses of human lives and commercial hardship, the Dover Chamber, then as now, emphasised that our future depended on stimulating trade: "The welfare of the Empire hinges much on commerce so that there is no alternative but to prepare for the future when peace shall once again reign throughout Europe." There is however one message for the current Dover Harbour Board from a hundred years ago. "We trust that this Naval Base will be found so indispensable that it will be fully equipped and maintained, when the serious loss the Town has suffered in the past through little use made of it by His Majesty's Fleet will be redressed."

## **12. Southern Water**

Since last July, the Chamber has received many comments about the actions of Southern Water with particular reference to the discharge of sewage on our tourist beaches in 2012 and 2014. Representations from the Chamber resulted in an invitation, which was gratefully accepted, to meet senior staff of Southern Water and to tour the pumping station at Palm Bay. It is expected that the detailed discussions during the visit last month will continue and result in positive actions to support our business community and to back tourism in East Kent. In fairness to Southern Water, it is worth noting that the company is restricted in its financial commitments. For instance, the regulator OFWAT imposed an obligation to reduce the ratio of consolidated net debt to Regulated Capital Value to 90% by the end of last month and we have learned that there are similar impositions on the ratio of EBITDA to consolidated net cash interest. Not many people will be aware that current legislation prevents Southern Water from disconnecting supply from domestic customers who default on their payments. There must be few retailers in East Kent who would be happy to be obliged to keep providing goods to a customer who consistently removes

items from the shop without paying for them. It is understandable why such a benign regime of imposed credit control is not available to commercial customers.

### 13. Social Media Report

The Chamber Business Networking Breakfast of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 was billed as “Increase Sales, Increase Profits” and that was certainly the message from the podium from Social Media specialist Jonnie Jensen. After 16 years in digital marketing, Jonnie was able to give Chamber members a rich insight into how they can use free tools to boost their brand presence and keep their current and new customers eager and informed. Careful to avoid preaching to the converted, Jonnie nonetheless kept the rapt attention of Chamber members with a comprehensive briefing on how to promote an Internet marketing strategy that makes the best possible use of content creation, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Generating sales leads and feeding a hungry customer base with good PR were also covered succinctly in his expert explanation of the main elements in effective eCRM, which for those readers who for some unfathomable reason missed out on a full English breakfast and a fascinating talk, stands for electronic Customer Relationship Management. Jonnie has joined the Chamber and looks forward to meeting fellow Chamber members at our events in Thanet, Dover and Shepway.

### 14. Anything You Want

Companies vary in their offer to potential customers. Some adopt a core strategy that specialises in producing a restricted range of closely monitored products. In contrast, others look to boost their market share with an extensive catalogue of items purposely designed to appeal to as many buyers as possible, or as Roy Orbison sang on his final album: “Anything you want, you got it, anything you need, you got it, anything at all, you got it”. When stocking such a wide range of goods, it is sometimes easy to forget the obvious items. One Chamber member has related that he undoubtedly witnessed the perils of trying to be everything to everyone when he visited a Garden Centre and found it had no lettuce seeds; plenty of greetings cards, every variety of chocolate and hundreds of books on subjects other than gardening, but not a single lettuce seed for his vegetable patch. He said it reminded him of a recent visit to New York City. We have our doubts about this story, but we leave it to our distinguished Chamber members to judge for themselves. The guest of a well-known financial institution, he was invited out to dinner at a restaurant of his choice, no expense spared. More familiar with the hot-dog stands outside Central Park and the small eateries near Times Square, he thought it wise to consult his guidebook which lists all the establishments everywhere with three Michelin stars. Having considered Daniel Humm’s Eleven Madison Park and the newly decorated Bernadin, he selected one of the others, intrigued by its claim that it caters for every taste; he telephoned his hosts with his decision. That evening, he donned his best cufflinks, inherited from his grandfather, and a smart evening suit, specially hired for the occasion, and arrived at the restaurant at the appointed hour. After drinks were served in the bar, the menus were handed around and our Chamber member was asked for his choice. With such a vast array of dishes, most of them described in a language he did not understand, he quite reasonably asked the waiter for a recommendation. “But Monsieur, we can cook anything, anything at all”, said the bemused garçon, evidently offended that anyone could possibly think otherwise. Sorely, tempted to reply with some salty language more often heard in the back-streets of our East Kent coastal towns, our Chamber member toyed with the idea of asking for beans on toast, but then he had an inspiration. “Anything at all?” he asked the waiter. “Naturellement, Monsieur”, came the Gallic reply, “we satisfy everyone”. “In that case”, said our somewhat aggrieved Chamber member, “I will start with rhinoceros toe-nails on toast.” Thirty-minutes later, the party was sitting amicably in the glorious splendour of the main dining room when the hors d’oeuvres were brought to the table. As the foie gras and truffle terrines were served to his companions, our Chamber member looked expectantly towards the waiter. “I’m sorry sir, very, very sorry,” said the waiter losing his French accent half-way through the apology. “But, I’m afraid we cannot supply your dish. We can’t and it pains me sorely and so here is some caviar on the house together with a bottle of champagne with our compliments. “Aha”, said our Chamber member, “I thought you would have a problem with Rhinoceros toe-nails on toast”. “Yes sir”, said the waiter.” I hate to admit it, but we have run out of bread”.

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It’s happening now, it’s happening in East Kent.  
For details of membership, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk)  
Offices in Broadstairs, Sandwich and Dover.

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