

***** Welcome to the Thanet & East Kent Insider *****

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider
17 September 2008

1. SEEDA and Thanet

East Kent is in the minds of SEEDA at the moment. The Investment Development Manager of the South East England Development Authority responsible for Kent is Ian Muat. He has accepted an invitation from the Thanet & East Kent Chamber to visit Thanet on Tuesday 7th October. SEEDA is charged by government with overseeing the regional economic strategy of South East England outside London. If you have any questions or comments for Ian, please send them by email to admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "SEEDA Comments".

2. Collect £1,000 without passing Go

This headline appeared in last week's edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider. We make no apologies for repeating it. Chamber members and their associates have now claimed £43,526 in rate relief and should be receiving their cheques in the next week. If your business has a rateable value of under £15,000, you may be eligible for a rebate for the current and past two years. It takes two minutes to claim and costs you the price of a stamp. All claims must be submitted before 30th September 2008. For full details, see last week's edition or email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "SBRR Details".

3. Roger Gale MP and Stephen Ladyman MP

Mr Roger Gale MP (Con) and Dr Stephen Ladyman MP are of course our elected representatives for Thanet North and Thanet South respectively. Respect there was in abundance at our gathering last Friday. Our distinguished MPs joined an evening meeting at Thanet District Council (TDC) in the company of the TDC leader, Cllr Sandy Ezekiel, Cllr Mike Jarvis, TDC Business Rates Officer, John Moss, and delegates from the Chamber Property Forum, Dr Fiona Sherriff and Mick German. We discussed the Rating (Empty Properties) Act 2007 which has had such a devastating effect on the commercial infrastructure of England and Wales. Remarkable though it may be, all the decision-makers present agreed to join the Chamber campaign to have the Act repealed in its entirety at the first opportunity and to press for the maximum 50% reduction permitted as an immediate amendment. If this comes to pass, it will enable East Kent businesses to retain millions of pounds in the local economy and will preserve empty offices, warehouses and factories from demolition. For an exclusive report of this ground-breaking meeting, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Business Rates Meeting of 12 Sep 2008".

4. New Members

We welcome to the Chamber the following new members: Profile Development and Training tel: 01843 869100; Let Direct tel: 01843 224808; Claires Bridal House tel: 01843 293587 and Sally Potter Enterprises tel: 07810 467232.

5. Margate Traders

On Monday 15th September at the Baptist Church in Cecil Square, Margate, Thanet District Council hosted a public meeting to discuss trading conditions in Margate. The message from the Head of Financial Services, Sue McGonigal, was that for this financial year TDC had received an increase in funding from government of just 1.1%. As the head of Bank of England, Mervyn King, forecast yesterday that inflation might reach 5%, TDC has effectively received a sharp cut in income. There was little comfort for Thanet businesses from this except for the assurance that front-line services will be a priority for the Council. Mark Seed, Head of Commercial Services, received many questions over litter and revealed that more is spent per head of population on street cleaning in Margate than anywhere else in Kent. Recent stiff fines of £80 for litter-dropping may help. Derek Harding of Margate Renewal Partnership confirmed that the Turner Contemporary is guaranteed funding of £8.2m from SEEDA and the Arts Council. Work will start before the end of the year. The Marks & Spencer building was the focus of much debate. The basic issue is that no suitable tenant will take on the building on a short lease and TDC cannot issue a long lease until at least 2010.

6. Martha Trust

Once again our congratulations go to Rose Osborne of Chamber member, Martha Trust. At a charity dinner last Friday, 125 guests were royally entertained by Kent's favourite comic, Dave Lee. The £6,000 raised on the night was matched by £6,000 from Basepoint. The resulting handsome sum will equip three new bedrooms for people with profound disabilities resident at the Martha Trust HQ in Deal. We will be asking Rose to reveal some of her secrets at our next Chamber Charity Forum.

7. Thanet Earth

We have received many requests for information and a booking form for the Thanet Earth presentation scheduled for 14th October 2008 at Quex Museum, Parks and Gardens. If you would like to find out more about this world-class facility in Birchington at the cutting edge of modern food production, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Thanet Earth Breakfast". If you have applied already, confirmation will follow by email in the next few days.

8. Credit Management or "Get the money In"

If you have ever had a problem getting a supplier to pay your invoice, this is the event for you. On the afternoon of 30th September 2008 in Broadstairs, Engage Accountancy and Credit Management is offering a free seminar to help you manage your cash flow. Too good to be true? Come and find out. For details, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Credit Management Seminar".

9. Events

Next week's edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider will feature a summary of Chamber events scheduled for the next few months. Get your pens and keyboards ready.

10. A lesson from the Scriptures

Last Monday's meeting of Margate Traders featured the senior Directors of Thanet District Council sitting against a backdrop of delightful drawings produced by the Baptist Sunday School. Given that the China Gateway has featured so prominently in the local press, it is perhaps odd that it was not mentioned during the evening. Protestors have focussed on Manston being situated above an aquifer. Last week, this Chamber voiced support for the China Gateway on BBC Radio Kent. Ironic then that the leader of Thanet District Council and its Chief Executive should be sitting in front of a drawing illustrating Psalm 136 with the words from the gospel, "He built the earth on deep waters". So he did.

11. Sponsors

We are grateful to Adecco Recruitment, tel: 01843 609292 and Girlings Solicitors, tel: 01843 220274, for sponsoring this edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.



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