

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

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

20th November 2008

1. For Your Eyes Only

Around 5,000 businesses contribute to the British Chambers of Commerce's QES, the Quarterly Economic Survey. The QES is an influential document that now regularly informs national news bulletins on television and is widely reported in the serious press. In liaison with our partners at the Channel Chamber, our Thanet & East Kent Chamber members have an opportunity to make their voice heard. We urge members, and only members, to take part and to express themselves freely as part of a UK-wide survey of what businesses really think. It takes but a few moments of your time to complete, but for the next three months you can bathe in the reflected glory of having your view taken into account in the media. Your name will not be mentioned and your contribution will be anonymous, but your view will be counted. Every entry strengthens this Chamber's hand in pressing the case for East Kent receiving more attention from central government. Chamber members are invited to submit their views on or before 21st November via the website at <http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/qes/>. The password is "economy" and the Chamber ID number requested is 93.

2. Just Resting

Anyone who has difficulty in getting used to Unemployment Exchanges being called Job Centres might not appreciate the use of the word "worklessness" to describe unemployment. But it is here to stay, especially in government documents. Actors sometimes use the expression, "resting between jobs". Somehow these are friendlier descriptions of that devastating state epitomized by Yosser Hughes in the 1982 programme, "Boys from the Blackstuff" with his heartfelt plea to "Gissa job". Whether you believe in a "downturn" or prefer the more blunt "recession", hard times for many are on the way. For reasons often mentioned in these pages, high levels of inward investment and large job hungry schemes in Thanet and East Kent should give this part of the world a resilience that might well run counter to national trends. But, whatever your own particular circumstances, it is undoubtedly a good idea to know how surrounding areas are faring. Item 3 below is taken from the always excellent Kent Council Analysis and Information Team which produces statistics in presentable formats with well-ordered data that gives an up-to-date picture of trends allowing an easy comparison with regional and national figures.

3. Unemployment, or for the Squeamish, Worklessness In Kent

In October 2008, there was an increase in unemployment in all areas of Kent except Dartford, Ashford and Tonbridge & Malling. Thanet continues to head the list with 3.6% registered unemployed. Sevenoaks replaces Tunbridge Wells as the employment hotspot with just 1% officially without a job. Canterbury maintains its relatively robust outlook at 1.5%. The county town of Maidstone has 1.4% of those available for work claiming what was once a harsh Unemployment Benefit and is now a cuddly teddy bear called Job Seekers Allowance. Dover registered 2.3% and Shepway 2.8%. Kent had an average rate of 1.9%, comfortably below the Great Britain figure of 2.6%. Another interpretation of these figures is that labour costs are likely to be low in Thanet and house prices high in Sevenoaks. For a copy of the report, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Unemployment Bulletin Kent October 2008".

4. Managing Cash Flow and Credit

This Chamber has long sought to raise awareness of the importance of credit management. The free seminar organised on 30 September 2008 with Chamber member Engee Accountancy & Credit Management highlighted the dangers of poor cash flow; the most common cause of failure for Small & Medium Enterprises in the UK. The Institute of Credit Management has now produced a series of guides, supported and endorsed by the British Chambers of Commerce, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Institute of Directors, HSBC, Barclays Bank, the Confederation of British Industry and a host of well-known financial institutions. The website features a picture of the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform, Baron Mandelson of Foy in the county of Herefordshire and Hartlepool in the county of Durham, greeting the reader with a cheery smile; as does the first page of every one of the ten guides. Baron Mandelson of Foy in the county of Herefordshire and Hartlepool in the county of Durham prefers to be known modestly as simply Lord Mandelson. The guides he introduces are easy to read and contain sound, practical advice. The full documents along with multiple images of Lord Mandelson in a red tie and blue shirt can be seen on screen at <http://www.creditmanagement.org.uk/berrguides.htm>.

5. Event Reminder

If you have not booked your place for the Thanet & East Kent Chamber's "Predict, Prevent and Prosper" business breakfast on 26th November or the "Thanet College: New Campus, New Opportunities" breakfast on 4th December, you might like to do so this week by sending an email to admin@tekc.co.uk and quote the event title above. It's probably the best £15.00 you will spend this year.

6. East Kent in WWI

Professor Nick Bosanquet will be appearing at the Broadstairs campus of Canterbury Christ Church University at 6pm on Thursday 27th November. This distinguished academic of Imperial College, London, will be giving a public lecture on the topic of "East Kent and the Western Front in World War I". The lecture will be preceded by a drinks reception starting at 5.15 pm. It would be helpful to the organizers if you would email Debbie Byford if you would like to attend. Debbie's email address is debbie.byford@canterbury.ac.uk.

7. Pre-Budget Report

The government's Pre-Budget Report is expected to be delivered to the House of Commons at 3.30 pm on 24th November 2008. If you are not able to listen to the live broadcast, the full text and a convenient summary will be available at the HM Treasury Website, see http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/prebud_pbr08_index.htm

8. BCC Transport Survey

The 2008 Transport Survey by our professional association, the British Chambers of Commerce, draws on the experience during the last 12 months of members drawn from the 100,000 companies in membership and the 5m workers employed. It is a serious piece of research that analyses our commercial transport network on land, by sea and in the air. There are recommendations for future transport policy and insights into associated sectors such as planning and the environment. A pre-publication copy seen by this Chamber confirms that the report will be of interest to almost all Chamber members. The final version will be published in the first week of December. The Thanet & East Kent Insider will keep you informed of how to obtain your free copy.

9. The Venerable Elvis Speaks

The Venerable Elvis is Thanet's celebrated hermit who lives in self-imposed obscurity in the hinterland between the defunct power station in Sandwich and the disused quarry in Manston. His appreciation of the natural life is unparalleled since the days of the great romantic poets; Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and that fat bloke who died fighting for the Greeks. Some members have contacted the Chamber and have asked what the Venerable Elvis does for entertainment, as a hermit's life does not permit a television or any homely comforts. In an exclusive interview with the Thanet & East Kent Insider, this renowned recluse revealed that he amuses himself with bird impressions. Our entreaties to him to imitate the sound of various birds met with a complete blank. Finally we asked him that if he couldn't produce the song of a nightingale, blackbird or woodpecker, what did he do? He replied, "I eat worms". It is indeed an honour to have such a spiritual leader living in our midst, even if he does eat worms.

9. Sponsors

We are grateful to Adecco Recruitment, tel: 01843 609292; Girlings Solicitors, tel: 01843 220274 and Evans EasySpace, tel: 0800 039 3900 & 07753 799 333 for sponsoring this edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.



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

For information on how you can benefit from being a member of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line 'Membership'.