

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

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

**4<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

### **1. More Inward Investment**

Microsoft HQ at Reading was just one of the companies attracted to the Chamber business breakfast at Thanet College this morning. There to hear about "Thanet College: New Campus, New Opportunities", the delegates were treated to an overview of the reasons for the planned move of Thanet College to a new purpose-built campus. College Principal, Sue Buss, gave a succinct and persuasive account of the need for the new premises. With a turnover of £15m, she manages a sizeable enterprise that seeks always to marry the best value efficiency of private industry with a demanding public education agenda. As such, the superb facilities promised for the new campus will give Thanet College the opportunity to deliver a wider range of programmes on one site. The new campus will be located in the centre of Thanet almost equidistant from the main population centres of Margate, Cliftonville, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. Relocation Director, Rob Thrower, showed computer generated images of the completed campus and revealed that the buildings will be ready to accept students in September 2011. An important part of the construction phase is the involvement of local companies providing products and services. The main contractor will be obliged to use "locally sourced labour and materials wherever possible". Package tenders will be operative from January 2009. All valid Thanet & East Kent Chamber members are on the list of preferred suppliers dispatched to Wates Construction, the "preferred second bidder". If you wish to make an individual approach, you should email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with subject line "Supplier to Wates" and we will send you details of the simple procedure required. The build programme will take 82 weeks and cover an area of 20,682 sq m. At peak, 400 operatives will be on site.

### **2. BBC & East Kent**

As part of its public service commitment, the BBC has an obligation to present a fair and accurate picture of local communities across the range of its media - radio, television and web pages. BBC Radio Kent is particularly keen to reflect the views of the business community. This Chamber is often asked to contribute to BBC radio and television programmes. We are pleased to bring the concerns and successes of members to a wider audience. The particular perspectives of Lovelys Gallery, tel: 01843 292757; Invicta Motors, tel: 01843 853555; ALE Computers, tel: 0845 241 7311 and Thorley Taverns, tel: 01843 602010 and general comments from many other members formed the basis of the report that can be heard until Sunday at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/console/p001jvrx>, fast forward to 1 hr 55 mins.

### **3. Flybe At KIA**

Chamber member, Kent International Airport (KIA), announced yesterday that Europe's largest international airline, Flybe, will be operating scheduled passenger flights to Jersey next summer. Drawing passengers from a wide catchment area covering Kent and much of the Home Counties, Flybe's vote of confidence is a major boost to the area. KIA's Managing Director, Matt Clarke, promises a "hassle-free service" from Manston. Following last week's ceremonial start to the construction of the Turner Contemporary in Margate, Thanet is benefiting from an unprecedented wave of inward investment. The granting of planning permission for Phase One of the China Gateway on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and the forthcoming completion of the first stage of Thanet Earth complement the promise of the London Array and Thanet Off-shore Wind Farm. This Chamber's contention that "It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet" has never looked more apposite.

### **4. Kent Messenger**

The government is aware that new challenges require new responses and so is the Kent Messenger Group. Recently completed purpose-built offices in Whitstable show that this multimedia group has confidence in Kent and is prepared to invest its resources in our commercial infrastructure. The images below were taken yesterday while on a tour of the magnificent new buildings which will underpin the KM Group's commitment to Kent. As part of a new focus on Thanet, one of the senior KM executives, James Coulton, explained that in April 2009, the KM Group will launch a quarterly supplement aimed directly at local businesses in Thanet. Further details will appear in subsequent editions of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.



## 5. Minister for the South East

Regular readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider will know that this Chamber is expecting a dedicated visit from Jonathan Shaw MP, the Minister for the South East. This is due to take place early in the New Year. Issues for discussion raised by Chamber members in East Kent include planning regulations, business rates and pub closures. If any Chamber members have particular matters they would like raised with the Minister, please email your comment to [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Jonathan Shaw meeting". The Chamber will be discussing with members a fair and equitable system to ensure that a cross-section of members get to meet the Minister. For a copy of Jonathan's Shaw's letter commenting on the Pre-Budget Report, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Jonathan Shaw PBR" and we will send it to you promptly. We do nice things like that.

## 6. New Haine Road

The super swish road on the route from Manston to Broadstairs has opened. Traffic is now directed past EuroKent to run alongside G Casino and Vue before it rejoins the main thoroughfare at the exit to Westwood Cross. If you have not updated your SatNav recently, you may find yourselves appearing to be ploughing through a field. Our advice in these situations is to switch off your electronic navigation system and adopt the more traditional approach of looking through the windscreen at where you are going. This radical return to time-honoured practices means you must forego the pleasures of a constantly changing multi-coloured map and the soothing female voice telling you to "Now turn around when possible", but it does have the advantage of avoiding running into other cars and pedestrians. My father's well-worn dictum that "The golden rule of motoring is that no two cars should occupy the same space at the same time" seems like sound advice in these circumstances.

## 7. Solve The Problem Before It Happens

If you wish to avoid disasters on the road and in your business, contingency planning is a valuable element in your portfolio of company priorities. Last week's business breakfast "Predict, Prevent & Prosper" featured a masterly talk by Chris Argent, Managing Partner of Girlings, on how to review your business in the current climate in order to make the most of the opportunities available. Anyone familiar with the Leeds United midfielder, Norman Hunter, known to many as "bite-your-legs Hunter", may be aware of his alleged fondness for the expression, "Get your retaliation in first". It is not for this Chamber to comment on the success of that strategy on the football field, but we do support measures that guard against failure in any aspect of your business. For details of how contingency planning can help you, contact Chamber member, The Fire Strategy Company, by email to [enquiries@firestrategy.com](mailto:enquiries@firestrategy.com) and you will receive a speedy reply.

## 8. The Venerable Elvis Speaks

The Queen's Speech yesterday may have overshadowed the Venerable Elvis's pronouncement to the world's media. Unlike the splendour that surrounds Her Majesty on state occasions, the Venerable Elvis lives in humble obscurity in the hinterland between the redundant power station in Sandwich and the disused limestone quarry in Manston. Indisputably Thanet's number one hermit, since he has clearly eclipsed all other rivals to that title, the Venerable Elvis submits himself to an interview with the Thanet & East Kent Insider when he feels that there are matters of great significance before the nation. Previous words of wisdom have included the advice that "When testing the depth of a swimming pool, do not use both feet". Countless lives may have been saved by such timely interventions. Earlier today, we approached the Venerable Elvis in his hovel to ask if he had any comments to make in the light of the reduction of 2.5% in VAT and today's announcement of a bank rate of 2%, the lowest for 57 years. When in deep contemplation, our sage tends to seek spiritual nourishment through stroking his long grey beard and turning to

the heavens for confirmation. With bated breath our seasoned reporter managed to note down the Venerable Elvis's words. Unworldly as he may be, his comments take into account the current controversies regarding the legal right to privacy of an MP in the House of Commons, the pressing need to combat obesity through promoting an active lifestyle and the moral dilemma in judging the best course of action in particular circumstances. "Before you ever pass judgment on anyone, you should walk at least one mile in their shoes. In this way, when you judge them, you are a mile away and you have their shoes." We are indeed blessed in Thanet to have such a wise man in our midst.

## 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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