

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

13th December 2008

1. Thanet Off-Shore Wind Farm

More good news for Thanet follows the sale of the Thanet Offshore Wind (TOW) by Christofferson, Robb & Co. After the late withdrawal of Scottish Power, the new owner, Vattenfall, is set to consolidate the company base in Ramsgate and bring its considerable experience as market leaders in Sweden to the construction and operation of the £780m development. Pubs, hotels and restaurants will be the first to benefit from the new boost to investment with more jobs to follow as the company engages staff for the maintenance of the turbines which have an expected life cycle of 40 years. Interviewed by the Thanet & East Kent Insider, the company confirmed that most of the construction should be completed by the end of 2009. If you are one of those people who think that wind is purely due to an inappropriate diet, think again. Britain is the windiest country in Europe and is poised to become the world leader in installed off-shore wind power. Adam Bruce, Chairman of the British Wind Energy Association estimates that wind power will overtake nuclear by 2013. Rob Hastings, Director of the Wind Estate at The Crown Estate, owner of the UK sea bed, promises significant new assistance to power generating companies prepared to invest in off-shore wind farms. As part of the new Round 3 agreement, Rob promises, "We will be co-investing up to 50% of the costs of developing the zones and identifying specific sites within each zone where wind farms could be built". Good news for the UK and good news for East Kent.

2. Rapid Results

New Chamber member, Rapid Results Marketing, promises Chamber members in East Kent a free two-hour session concentrating on tried and tested methods available to generate interest in your product or services. Offering a personal consultation with no obligation attached, Dean Garland will visit you at a time and date convenient to you and make no charge for doing so. Too good to be true? Telephone Dean and ask him on 0844 4480070.

3. Leaders Are Born Not Made

What a load of twaddle. Leadership skills can be acquired and improved, just like the ability to drive or ride a bicycle. Not many people arrive in this world with their bicycle clips in place and ready to pedal off into the sunset. Maternity wards would require extra levels of policing if this were the case. However difficult you find it to lead a team or get your points across in negotiations, you will undoubtedly benefit from the advice of new Chamber member, Knowledge Hive. For leadership training and support for companies and individuals, look no further than Jo Gideon, Managing Director of this innovative training company in Broadstairs. Email Jo at j.gideon@theknowledgehive.com and mention the Thanet & East Kent Insider for full details.

4. Securing Finance

Chamber members looking to secure a loan from a high street bank are welcome to contact the following Chamber members: Dale Cawdron at Berkeley Warburg Financial Planning, tel: 01843 209040; James Galbraith at County Financial Services, tel: 01843 825608; Rebecca Edwards at Kent Local Business Team at Barclays, tel: 0775 548 588; Linda Owen at HSBC, tel: 08457 404 404, Steven Cleaver at L & G Mortgage Solutions, tel: 01843 845600; Nick Christodoulou at Lloyds TSB, tel: 01227 462242; John Kirk at NatWest Thanet Business Centre, tel: 01843 244431 and Matthew Dagleish at Universal Independent Mortgage Services, tel: 01843 599773. If you are still without a loan, the South East England Development Agency, SEEDA, is about to make £3 million in transition loans available to help companies that are struggling to secure support from the commercial banking sector. Available through the independent funding body, Finance South East, the Bridging Mezzanine Debt Fund will offer firms unsecured loans of up to £150,000 to bridge the gap between the amount the banks can offer businesses and the amount these companies need to survive and grow. Successful businesses will not have to repay any capital or interest until the end of the loan period. For details, contact SEEDA direct on tel: 01483 484200.

5. Business Rates

ITV Meridian visited the Chamber on Friday 12th December 2008 to record a short item in support of our campaign for the full repeal of the Rating (Empty Properties) Act 2007. The shooting schedule included shots of an empty warehouse in Manston Road, Ramsgate which has incurred a business rates liability of £42,000 p.a. since the 1 April 2008. The owner is naturally displeased. As he puts it, "The building is making no use of public services and yet I am suddenly required to pay a huge sum in business rates with no income from a tenant." Commercial property investors in East Kent have traditionally provided premises for start up companies and fledgling enterprises looking for reasonably priced storage facilities. The new legislation has led to the widespread demolition of such properties in England and Wales as owners strive to avoid

the threat of bankruptcy. East Kent is particularly vulnerable to this new tax which is viewed as a direct attack on the business community. Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council, has added his weight to the campaign. In an email to the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, his words undoubtedly reflect the views of companies throughout the county. "The current economic climate is the perfect opportunity for the government to scrap this taxation which is damaging so many of our businesses. I have been very pleased with the support that our lobbying has generated, particularly from Kent MPs, but our message is falling on deaf ears. How many more companies need to go out of business before the government changes its mind."

6. When is a Chamber Not a Chamber?

The answer to this question is that there is only one official Chamber in Thanet and that is this one, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber. With our partners at the Channel Chamber of Commerce, we represent the official voice of the Chamber of Commerce network in the East Kent coastal business community and the only organisations sanctioned by the British Chambers of Commerce numbering 100,000 companies and 5m workers. As the largest business support bodies in our respective areas, our combined membership represents nearly every sector of the local economy. Our good relations at local, regional and national level ensure that the views of members are represented where it matters. A full programme of networking events and specialized business-to-business forums give our members the sales and promotion opportunities denied to others. We look forward to early February 2009 when the Minister for the South East, Jonathan Shaw, and the Chairman of SEEDA, Jim Braithwaite, will be visiting the Chamber.

7. We Salute Clic Sargent

Congratulations to the children's charity, CliC Sargent and the Kent and Medway Walking Bus scheme for raising £9,000 at an abseiling event at the beginning of December. Chamber member, Express By Holiday Inn, donated the top prize. Sales Manager for the Group, Manager, Fraser Donaldson, informed the Chamber that the prize was won by a family with a 3 year old son suffering from leukemia. The parents and all three children will now enjoy a luxury stay at the Express By Holiday Inn, Manston.

8. Merry Christmas

This is the last edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider until the New Year. We wish our readership of 2,000 key decision-makers every happiness and success in 2009. For regular readers expecting a bon mot from the Venerable Elvis or some politically incorrect comment on business practices, we will leave such unfriendly jibes for 2009. However, for those of you who have ever wondered why Santa Claus is always portrayed as a man, ask yourselves if you know of any woman who is prepared to wear the same outfit year after year. I don't.

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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