

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

10<sup>th</sup> July 2009

### 1. Police Plans & Priorities

Kent Police Authority has just published its plan for policing Kent for the next three years. In a comprehensive document of 58 pages, we learn of the strategy outlined for “building public confidence, effectively tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, protecting the public and making the best use of our resources”. The Kent Police Authority Chair, Ann Barnes, and the Chief Constable, Michael Fuller, note in a foreword to the document that the policing of the Climate Camp at Kingsnorth power Station on the Hoo Peninsular in August last year presented a particular challenge as one of the biggest policing operations ever undertaken by the force. They take understandable satisfaction in reflecting that normal levels of policing were maintained throughout the county and the demonstration ended peacefully. Anyone unfamiliar with the terminology of law enforcement will be relieved to know that a handy glossary appears at the end of the document. This reveals that to police insiders LSC refers to the Legal Services Commission and not the Learning and Skills Council. Similarly, IOM does not relate to the Isle of Man but to Integrated Offender Management. Anyone from the Lingfield Sowing Circle or the Institute Of Masochists might object, but for most of us the glossary is a welcome addition. To find out more about the policing priorities in Kent and Medway or to discover what PACT stands for, look at the website at <http://kentpa.kent.police.uk/Publications/Policing%20Plan/Policing%20Plan%202009-11.pdf>

### 2. Bad Debts

Chamber member HSBC has directed our attention to a report by the Financial Services Consumer Panel which reports that nearly half of all British consumers do not seek advice when they find themselves in a bad financial position. The Panel has found that of those who do turn to others for advice on improving their finances, one third went to their mortgage provider, while one in four asked a Citizens Advice Bureau. The Chamber membership includes a wide variety of financial experts who are qualified and experienced in debt counselling. We welcome enquiries on a confidential basis and will do everything we can to assist any Chamber member with financial worries.

### 3. Protect Your Company

We still have a few places left for the presentation on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009 by a senior partner at Boys & Maughan Solicitors on “Top Ten Tips To Keep You Out of an Employment Tribunal”. This business breakfast at the Chamber’s premises at the Kent Innovation Centre in Broadstairs will also allow an opportunity to promote your goods and services to other delegates. At only £12 per person, this event represents excellent value and will help you to stay competitive. To reserve your place, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line “Employment Tribunal? No Thank You” and we will send you details.

### 4. Weddings

From 30 September this year, Deal, Walmer and Dover Castles will no longer be accepting bookings for weddings and corporate events, With income from such activities representing only 6% of turnover and causing considerable disruption to the timetable for visitors to the attractions, English Heritage has decided to concentrate its efforts on upgrading facilities and enhancing the visitor experience. Enquiries for weddings will still be arriving at English Heritage and this Chamber is compiling a list of alternative venues and associated products and services which can be given to callers to the castles. If you can offer one of the following: marriage service venue, reception, transport, floristry, accommodation – please email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the appropriate subject line and we will ensure that you are on the list. Hotels in membership will automatically be listed for accommodation.

### 5. Friday Night at Westwood Cross

Every Friday in July from 5pm to 8pm, G Casino at Westwood Cross Broadstairs is offering Chamber members half-price draft beer and selected cocktails at £2.50. For more details, contact the Sales and Events Manager, Sherrill Hawker, tel: 01843 579361 or 01843 579999.

### 6. How Are We Doing?

The British Chambers of Commerce publishes a Quarterly Economic Survey (QES), the largest and most authoritative independent report from the private sector which covers over 5,000 businesses in every region of the UK. It is published in advance of official figures and is closely monitored by the Treasury and the Bank of England. The feedback for the second quarter

of this year produced some mixed results. There was improvement in most critical national balances, but by historical standards the levels are decidedly weak. Second quarter balances in manufacturing for home sales and orders showed an improvement of 18 points but remain down 37% for the year. The domestic service sector increased by 7 points for the quarter but is still 16% below last year. Similarly, home orders are 24% below this time last year but show a rise of 5 points from the previous quarter. Export performance, investment and cash flow are all significantly below last year's positions. Employment in manufacturing is at its lowest level since QES began at the beginning of 1989. Only 20% of manufacturers are working at full capacity, a position that is unchanged from the first three months of the year. Quarterly manufacturing cash flow balances remain unchanged at an historical low of -32%. Pressure to raise prices is still weak. Born optimists looking for any possible sign of a recovery will take heart from a general view that the worst may be behind us. Although 2009 Q2 confidence ratings are low by comparison with the past, they are now positive. Manufacturers report a +2% expectation that turnover will improve, a rise of 40 points, and the service sector is also looking forward to a 19 point rise in turnover, giving a year-on-year confidence rating of +7%. The BCC concludes that "The Q2 results confirm that the pace of decline is clearly easing. The worst phase of the recession is over, but serious downward pressures persist across all sectors and regions". It continues that "Talk of recovery is premature" and recommends the adoption by government of "a credible medium-term strategy for improving our public finances".

## **7. Can You Credit It?**

The Thanet & East Kent Insider often reports on the importance of credit control, enticing the reader with headlines such as "Get The Money In" (19<sup>th</sup> March 2009) or "Managing Cash Flow and Credit" (20 November 2008). Regular readers will know that the most common cause of business failure for new companies is poor cash flow. In other words, you pay your suppliers but your customers do not pay you. The Institute of Credit Management is the professional body that oversees the training of credit managers and is interested in your experience of managing credit. If you have two minutes to spare, you might like to answer the brief multiple choice survey of 19 questions which can be found at <http://pro.surveystack.com/s/TR8zkzueYL-SY-R>.

## **8. More About Cash**

The British Chambers of Commerce, Dell and Intel have collaborated on a series of video presentations. If you prefer watching to reading, you might like to have a look at the filmed discussion, "Your Business, Your Cash Flow", which is freely available to view or download at [http://www.smallbusinessadvice.tv/chat/your\\_business\\_your\\_cashflow](http://www.smallbusinessadvice.tv/chat/your_business_your_cashflow). Has the presenter, Ian Collins, fastened his shirt collar or is that a new trend in tie wearing? You decide. Ian's unusual collar and bright blue jacket sit opposite Martin Morrin of RBS Invoice Finance and Patrick Fennelly of Moving Venue Caterers. Patrick has the darkest suit, Patrick has the longest hair. Ian has the funniest shirt collar. They make some serious points about recovering money from clients, credit checks, deposits and bad debt protection. If you need to discuss bad debt insurance and require some expert guidance, contact Ray Johnson at Independent Insurance Services, tel: 01303 221 188, or David Brown at Millards Insurance tel: 01304 61 3072.

## **9. Television Beckons**

Wall to Wall Television, the makers of Who Do You Think You Are?, 1900 House, 1940s House and Edwardian Country House, is developing a new project that aims to bring the British High Street of 100 years ago back to life. Does that ring a bell with anyone near you? Wall to Wall was recently awarded the title of "The Most Respected Independent Production Company" by its industry peers at the Broadcast Magazine. Founded in 1988, Wall to Wall is looking to tell the story of one hundred years of British trading and shopping by challenging a group of modern day shopkeepers to go back in time. It is looking for an existing group, cluster or parade of around 5 or 6 period shops that may be vacant, unused or awaiting development and could be revamped and populated by local people willing to try their hand at the crafts and businesses of past eras. The production company is hoping to find an area with a rich history, a character that's sympathetic to the project and a community that would relish getting involved. All enquiries and expressions of enthusiasm should be communicated directly to Wall to Wall. Interested parties are invited to contact Michael Fraser by telephone to 020 7241 9349 or email [michael.fraser@walltowall.co.uk](mailto:michael.fraser@walltowall.co.uk). Alternatively call, Laura Jackson, tel: 020 7241 9308 or email [laura.jackson@walltowall.co.uk](mailto:laura.jackson@walltowall.co.uk).

## **10. Swine Flu**

Chamber members will be familiar with the current outbreak of Swine Flu, a new strain of influenza. The good news is that most cases reported in East Kent have been mild. The best advice we have received is as follows: If you fall ill at work, go home until you have fully recovered. If you fall ill at home, don't come to work until you are fully fit again. If you are ill and worried about your symptoms, call your GP who should be able to provide a diagnosis over the telephone. Workplace hygiene is especially important at the moment. Wash your hands regularly and when using tissues, follow the maxim, "Catch-it-Bin it." Attached to this email is a pdf file with the latest official NHS guidance. So you see, you are not alone. Somebody does care.

## 11. A Fresh Perspective On Recycling

If you have recently suffered bereavement, you may wish to skip this item, but the rest may find it easier to digest. A Thanet & East Kent Insider reader returned from a remote Pacific Island a few years ago with a story he had heard while on holiday in the capital's only international hotel. Apparently, one seasoned American traveller was trekking in the island jungle when he came across a tribe of cannibals. According to the American, he was treated as an honoured guest and managed to engage the educated headman in a detailed discussion on social practices. Eventually, the tourist felt confident enough to ask, "Forgive me, but as a Westerner, I find it difficult to understand how you can kill people and eat them. How do you manage that?" The headman went into a lengthy explanation of the process of cannibalism, finishing with a detailed description of the recipe and cooking process that is the highlight of a celebratory feast following any successful raid on a neighbouring tribe. By the way, if any readers should find themselves to be invited as a guest to such a feast, avoid the sausages. Still somewhat aggrieved at the notion of eating human flesh, the tourist acknowledged that different societies had different customs. The Headman agreed and added, "Are people ever killed in the USA?" The tourist had to admit that the murder rate in US cities was unacceptably high. The headman listened carefully to the circumstances behind such homicides and the variety of causes and then replied, "Well, you think our customs are strange, but why do you kill people in the West and not eat them?" Ghoulish perhaps, but he did have a point.

## 12. Sponsors

We are grateful to Adecco Recruitment, tel: 01843 609292; Girlings Solicitors, tel: 01843 220274 and Express By Holiday Inn tel: 01843 820250 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 details of membership, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk)**

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