

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

20<sup>th</sup> November 2009

### 1. Chamber New Director

Thanet & East Kent Chamber is delighted to welcome to the board of directors, Somesh Jain. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, he brings with him the experience of working at a senior level at Glaxo and Ciba Geigy together with an in-depth knowledge of SMEs in East Kent. With the exciting prospect of a world-class Marine Energy Park in our backyard and the huge inward investment arriving from Thanet Offshore Windfarm, the London Array, the China Gateway, Kent International Airport Development, Royal Sands, Dreamland Heritage Park and the Turner Contemporary, the Chamber will be looking to strengthen its board further in order to keep pace with developments in East Kent and ensure its membership receives the very best information and advice.

### 2. Print And Be Pleased

Clive Tucker of Oyster Press Whitstable, tel: 01227 772605, has contacted the Chamber to draw the attention of members to the imminent increase in VAT from 15% to 17.5% effective from 1 January 2010. He makes the valid point that if you have some printing pending, you would be well advised to contact your printer as soon as possible. Clive can also be contacted in person in his office at 110 John Wilson Business Park, Whitstable where he will be pleased to discuss your printing requirements. Other chamber members who can assist with your printing needs are Seaward Color Copy of Broadstairs tel: 01843 602557; Monster Marketing of Ramsgate tel: 01843 853311, Sharp Printing Services of Broadstairs tel: 01843 600123 and Lanes of Broadstairs tel: 01843 861314.

### 3. Insider News

This is the 85<sup>th</sup> edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider. During its history as a weekly business bulletin, it has been distinguished by its content rather than by its design. The editor welcomes comments and suggestions for an upgrade or template with the proviso that the result should not be too memory hungry and should allow for the edition to be read easily on screen by the 2,000 or so distinguished, intelligent and remarkably good-looking subscribers who accept the Insider in their in-box each week.

### 4. Yet More About Pensions

We continue our campaign to raise awareness about the impending changes to pension arrangements. As an active and usually vociferous member of the government's advisory group, this Chamber takes a special interest in the costs and obligations to be imposed on Small & Medium Enterprises. Cllr Clive Hart has kindly drawn our attention to a recent report by the Department of Work & Pensions on the likely responses by SMEs to the 2012 pension reforms. For a copy of this 88-page document, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "DWP SME Pension Report". Anyone with a professional interest in pensions will find this report most useful, as will anyone else who has difficulty getting to sleep at night, as the following extract shows. "In discussing the contribution rates that employers would make, all of the non-providers, non contributors and those contributing less than the 3% indicated that they would contribute no more than the minimum 3%. Employers that were already offering pensions with more than a 3% contribution – and typically had a high take-up – thought that they would expand their existing scheme to the rest of the workforce on the same contributions basis." If you understand the words but not what they mean to your company, contact the Chamber and we will put you in touch with one of our pensions specialists,

### 5. Training

In its most recent Quarterly Economic Bulletin of earlier this month, the ever excellent Research & Intelligence department of Kent County Council summed up the current training climate neatly as "Business continues to value training – but support is required to maintain investment" and "to ensure firms continue to invest in apprenticeships, financial support is a priority". The same bulletin states later, "The gloomy picture painted by today's survey is one of not only fewer jobs but also of stagnant salary levels and much increased competition". This Chamber is currently in negotiations with public funding bodies to bring much needed support to companies in the East Kent coastal business community. Keep your eyes on the Thanet & East Kent Insider for details.

### 6. News From Dover

The latest financial report from the Port of Dover shows a record £60.8m in revenues with ferries contributing £44.3 million, up 3.7%. Cruise ship visits increased from 132 to 144 with receipts up 28.9% and a record 274,000 passengers. Similar rises are projected for the current financial year. We know from a report by Arup in 2006 that the Port of Dover contributes £557 million to the economy of which 91% is estimated to fall within Kent. With our friends at the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, this Chamber will be working closely with Dover Harbour Board to maximize the opportunities for companies in the East Kent coastal business community to benefit from their close proximity to one of the busiest drive-on, drive-off ferry terminals in the world. This

Chamber supports the £400 million development plan for Dover Terminal 2 and looks forward to the day when improvements to the road and parking infrastructure will replace the wholly inadequate measures currently in force when Operation Stack is implemented. The severe congestion that results from queues of heavy goods vehicles on our major trunk roads restricts access to East Kent businesses and prevents or delays deliveries of supplies to our shops, offices and factories.

## **7. Industrial Professors**

A meeting last week of the Industrial Professors board of Thanet College looked at the many training opportunities available at the College. This board represents a powerful lobbying group and includes leaders from Thorley Taverns and Summit Aviation as well as distinguished representatives from the public sector. Although Thanet College is known to many for its expertise in catering and hairdressing, there are many more students studying engineering and business-led programmes. For details of courses, contact the Workforce Development Department by telephone to 01843 605032 or email [shelly.elson@thanet.ac.uk](mailto:shelly.elson@thanet.ac.uk).

## **8. Academy FM**

Kent newest radio station, Academy FM, is now set to start broadcasting in early 2010. Ofcom has awarded the station a frequency which is now awaiting clearance from France. East Kent's magnificent benefactor, Roger De Haan, has agreed to supply most of the technical equipment and pre-launch expenditure with the result that the station is now close to finalising its budget in preparation for the launch. Some Kent County Council councillors have kindly agreed to allocate some of their remaining funding allocation to this community project. With a remit to involve school children throughout Thanet and not just at the Marlowe Academy where the studio is based, Academy FM promises to make a major contribution to training young people in the creative industries sector as well as providing a significant new focus on Thanet. Operations Director, David Atkey, is used to handling pressure situations, as anyone on the BBC staff will testify. You don't get to be a producer of Bob Geldoff's Live Aid without having considerable diplomatic skills to add your technical prowess. This Chamber wishes David and his station manager, Pete Willson, every success in raising the final amount of money to meet its budget target.

## **9. Pfizer**

As residents and businesses in Sandwich know, Pfizer's manufacturing plant at the East Site ceased in June of this year. The first fermentation units used to manufacture Terramycin, an antibiotic, were installed fifty-five years ago and celebrated at the time by a visit from Sir Alexander Fleming, the Nobel Prize winning scientist who discovered penicillin. Since then, Pfizer has made a remarkable contribution to East Kent life and we celebrate the community-minded spirit of its managers and shareholders. In 2008, Pfizer donated more than £1.3 million to community groups with 600 employees volunteering their time to work on community projects. Every day 2.7 million Britons take medicines provided by Pfizer and the company remains fully committed to its research programmes. Currently under investigation are new treatments for Alzheimer disease, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, dry eye disease and transplant rejection. In a letter to this Chamber, the Pfizer Community Affairs Manager, Kevin Charles, notes that the company will "continue to help find new cures for unmet medical need."

## **10. New Chamber Members**

Thanet & East Kent Chamber is delighted to welcome the following new members. AEI Compounds of Sandwich is a world leader in the development, manufacture and sale of specialized thermoplastic and cross linkable polymer compounds. An increasing order book and heavy investment in new machinery suggest that this innovative company is likely to go from strength to strength in its new location on Sandwich Industrial Estate. For details, telephone 01304 616171. Snappys of Whitstable is an adventure playground owned by Nicholas & Katy Murray and Chris & Ruth Town. With seven children between them, they know how to keep youngsters entertained and are keen to welcome under 12s and their parents to their centre behind Tesco Extra on the Joseph Wilson Estate, tel: 01227 282100. Acorn Bowman Finance & Investment Management specialises in offering advice on pensions and investments. From their central location in Broadstairs, manager Phil Bowman and his team keep a sharp eye on the world financial markets to ensure that their clients receive the very best advice and service. If you want the same, telephone 01843 609365. Dean Garland and Associates of Birchington preach a doctrine of three ways to grow your business; lead generation, sales conversion and customer maximisation. To find what these terms could mean for you, give Dean Garland a call, tel: 0844 4480 070.

## **11. SatNav Problems**

One baffled member of the public has contacted the Chamber asking for advice about his new Satellite Navigation System. Although this was fresh out of its box, when he drove along New Haine Road on the western approach to Westwood Cross Shopping Centre in Thanet last Wednesday, a strident female voice told him "Make a u turn now, make a u turn now". The Thanet & East Kent Insider reported on this phenomenon in its edition of 4 December 2008. It appears that the New Haine Road is still classified as a ploughed field in the software supplied to at least one of the top three SatNav companies in Europe. Our advice now is the same as it was nearly a year ago and bears repetition. Adopt the traditional approach of looking through the windscreen at where you are going. This radical return to a time-honoured practice will mean that you must forego the pleasure of a constantly changing multi-coloured map but it does have the advantage of avoiding running in to other cars and pedestrians. Bear in mind at all times, the golden rule of motoring, "No two cars should occupy the same space at the same time".

## 12. Our Sponsors

The Thanet & East Kent Insider is grateful for the support and sponsorship provided by Girlings, Express By Holiday Inn and Adecco. Girlings Solicitors has been managing the managing the legal affairs of commercial and private clients for over a century. Twenty-six partners and one hundred and twenty members of staff ensure a comprehensive range of services from the local offices in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay and Margate. Offices in France and Spain complement specialist departments for charities, individuals and companies. For details, telephone 01843 220274. Express By Holiday took on the daunting task of restoring the former Prospect Inn at Minster. The result is a spectacular hotel that combines the best of Oliver Hill's 1930s design with ultra modern facilities and technological support. Conveniently located for business guests and holiday makers in East Kent, the meeting rooms and 105 bedrooms are available at competitive prices throughout the year. For details, telephone 01843 820250. Adecco is the world's largest HR solutions company offering a comprehensive service of temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, outplacement, career services, training and consulting. Officially designated as a 2009 British Superbrand, Adecco is represented in Thanet and Dover by its Broadstairs office, tel: 01843 609292.



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David Foley  
Chief Executive, Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited  
Director, Channel Chamber of Commerce  
Fellow, Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce  
Tel: +44 (0) 1843 609289  
Fax: +44 (0) 1843 609291  
Email: davidfoley@tekc.co.uk  
Mobile: +44 (0) 7967 284850

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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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