

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

27th November 2009

1. Investment In East Kent

These pages often feature news of inward investment in East Kent. The arrival of new Chamber member AEI Compounds in Sandwich, mentioned in last week's edition, being a good example. This company's TP521 range of cable sheathing propelled AEI Compounds into the Premier League of manufacturers with a proven solution to the cracking problems previously associated with Halogen Free Flame retardant cable coatings. Stonelees Golf Centre is another of a growing number of investors in East Kent, proving its confidence in the future by building a clubhouse extension, a significant investment from which all local golfers can benefit. The Thanet & East Kent Insider will keep you updated on the construction and launch date. Stonelees has much to offer the experienced golfer on the 9-hole Heights Course. The Par 3 course is ideal for beginners and improvers. The Executive Course will appeal to those who like to make a deal while they play. One of the little known facts about Stonelees is that it is also home to a wide variety of wildlife, including weasels, stoats and foxes. Its water voles and birds are particularly prized. The short-eared owl, peregrine falcon and European crane are popular around the fairways as was the heron which successfully raised three chicks on the course. Since opening in 1994, Stonelees has provided a warm welcome to golfers of all abilities and ages. If you want to seek out one or two of those clubs at the back of the garage and hit 30 practice balls on the club driving range for the very reasonable price of £1.50 or dream of winning the Open on the hi-tech golf simulator, the staff of Stonelees will also be delighted to see you. For details, telephone 01843 823133 or visit Stonelees Golf Centre, Ebbsfleet Lane, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5DJ.

2. Thanet & East Kent Chamber

It has come to our attention that some other business support organisations may be contacting Thanet & East Kent Chamber members with membership propositions that could be easily taken as originating from this Chamber. Please note that Thanet & East Kent Chamber operates independently from other organisations in Shepway and elsewhere. If you have any doubts about any of the communications you have received, please contact the Thanet & East Kent Chamber by telephone to 07967 284850 (24 hrs) or by email to admin@tekc.co.uk.

3. Business Breakfast Report

The Chamber November business breakfast took place last Tuesday at Chamber member, the Pfizer Social Club. After a full English breakfast, Adam Freeland, manager of the social club, briefed delegates on the facilities available and the services he can offer. He is happy to take calls to tel: 01304 649505 to discuss individual arrangements. The main theme of the session was how to reduce costs or increase income or preferably do both. Delegates were treated to a series of expert presentations accompanied in each case with the offer of a free individual consultation at a later date on individual needs and specific solutions. Martin White of Empowered Business, tel: 0776 8267515 gave a masterly introduction to boosting sales and marketing with proven methods drawn from his experience with large companies. Martin Young of Atlantic BR, tel: 0781 353 7456, outlined the huge cost savings available from taking advantage of the corporate discounts he can access on gas, electricity, water and telephone charges. Norman Gray of Engee Accountancy & Credit Management, tel: 01843 599179, stressed the critical importance of professional advice in keeping on good terms with your customers but ensuring that they pay for what they have bought. Robin Evans of Boys & Maughan, tel: 01843 234000, gave a brief account of how to avoid expensive and possibly ruinous litigation by taking professional legal advice before the problem occurs. Bruce Hodge of Mach Associates, tel: 0870 3219986, illustrated perfectly the benefits of using VOIP, Voice Over Internet Protocol, to reduce your telephone charges to near zero. Peter Walton of Lean2Green, tel: 01843 860083, showed how waste reduction, a green policy and adopting the principles of lean manufacturing in your business can not only make you and your customers feel good, but can lead to considerable savings that have an almost immediate effect on your bottom line. Neal Ashford of Lavender Blue Media, tel: 01795 424252, gave a compelling account of how the addition of a short, professionally produced promotional video can dramatically increase traffic to your website and boost sales. Mick Rendell of Acorn Bowman Finance & Asset Management, tel: 01843 609365, illustrated neatly how to make the best of future pension legislation together with offering a source of advice on where to place any investment capital for maximum return. Emily Milne of Cariss, tel: 0870 224 5421, briefed delegates on the boost to turnover that could follow from extracting the maximum from your company data through a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that is kind to your budget. John Harrington of Harrington Associates, tel: 07974 374683, summarised a few case studies where he had worked alongside the owner or Managing Director to provide a confidential advisory service resulting in record profits and major cost reductions. Lisa Jones of Fraud Consultants UK completed the team of experts and was able to answer questions on how preventing and detecting fraud can prevent potentially disastrous consequences for your business.

4. Tourism

The Thanet & East Kent Insider makes no apology for returning to the theme of tourism. After all, this week's edition for once makes no mention of business rates and we must be careful not to be too interesting or our readers will not take us seriously. The seminal report from Deloitte's commissioned by VisitBritain, The Economic Case for the Visitor Economy, was published just over a year ago in September 2008. It showed that tourism contributed £52 billion and 1.36 million jobs directly to the Gross Domestic Product in Britain. The indirect impact was considerably more, £8.2 billion and 2.66 million jobs. In other words, in 2007 tourism directly or indirectly contributed 8.2% of our national turnover. Kent is particularly well placed to attract more than its fair share of income from tourists. As VisitKent informs us, Kent is the oldest county in England and has the most castles and historic houses. Ramsgate has the only Royal Harbour in Britain and Sandwich has the highest density of listed structures and the most medieval buildings. Anyone old enough to recall Manston during WWII will know that it was the most bombed airfield in the UK. The history of warfare

is all around our East Kent coast dating back to the arrival of the arrival of Hengist and Horsa in AD 449 and Julius Caesar in 55 BC. With every era of British history represented on or near our East Kent coastline, we should be the envy of other areas of the UK.

5. How Do We Make More Money From Tourists?

One of the problems identified in the Deloitte report above is the 'Free rider problem'. This is defined as the position when there is little or no incentive for individual companies to market the visitor economy together for their common good if others who have not contributed benefit for free. This sad fact is identified as a 'major market failure'. However, this is precisely where the Thanet & East Kent Chamber of Commerce can work with organisations such as Visit Kent to promote the area and bring more customers into our shops. This Chamber will be liaising with its members and public bodies over the coming months to work together to stimulate the visitor economy and generate more turnover. Anyone with a professional interest in rural tourism in East Kent might also find it worthwhile to contact Sarah Loftus who is working closely with VisitKent on initiatives to bring more money to tourist venues outside the big cities. Sarah can be reached by email to sarah@sarahloftus.com.

6. Fairport Convention

We are grateful to Fiona Sherriff of Margate Harbour Arm for drawing our attention to the forthcoming gig by Fairport Convention. This premier electric folk band will be appearing at the Theatre Royal on 30th January 2010. Tickets are currently still available from the box office, tel: 0845 130 1786. As the new Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury will not open until late summer 2011 at the earliest, this January show is likely to attract fans from all over East Kent. Fairport Convention's album, *Liege & Lief*, was recently voted by Radio 2 listeners as 'The Most Influential Folk Album of All Time'. The band's line-up consists of Simon Nicol on guitar and lead vocals, Dave Pegg on bass and backing vocals, Chris Leslie on fiddle, mandolin, bouzouki and lead vocals, Ric Sanders on violin and Gerry Conway on drums and percussion. It should be a good night.

7. Margate Christmas Lights Plus

There will be fireworks to accompany the switching on of Margate Christmas lights on Friday 4th December. Carols will begin from 5.30 pm. Also present will be a percussion band, the cast of *Oliver*, dancers and a lantern and flag procession. It would be remiss of this Chamber not to give due prominence to the Christmas market. After all, it is the private sector that fundamentally pays for everything, even at Christmas. For more information on the promotion at the piazza, telephone 01843 221704.

8. Thanet Works

As previously noted in the Thanet & East Kent Insider, as the largest business support organisation in the area, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber was commissioned by Thanet Works to prepare a report on how some or all of the remaining money from the £4.089 million allocated to Thanet from the Working Neighbourhood Fund can be best directed to stimulate employment in the private sector in Thanet. Following discussions with Chamber members and senior public officials, this report has now been submitted to the board of Thanet Works for consideration. Subject to agreed media protocols, we will keep readers informed of developments.

9. Broadstairs Traffic

After extensive public consultation, Kent Highway Services in liaison with Kent County Council is in the process of developing the third phase of a traffic plan for Broadstairs in order to reduce congestion and promote a fair balance between the needs of residents, shoppers and tourists. Details of the scheme are available at item 25, see <http://tdc-mg-dmz.thanet.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=118&MId=1699&Ver=4>. Chamber members and readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider are invited to comment on the latest proposals for signage. The Chamber has received a copy of the options and will be pleased to share these with any interested parties. To obtain your copy, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Broadstairs Signage Phase 3". Any comments should be sent direct by email to broadstairs.traffic@kent.gov.uk by Friday 18 December 2009.

10. Surely Not More About Margate?

Most definitely yes. It must only a question of time before Melynn Bragg makes a programme about the cultural regeneration of Thanet's seaside towns. Academy FM informs us that Diversity, the winner of the third series of Britain's Got Talent, will be performing in Margate on 23 March 2010. Since the dancers triumphed in the show's final on 30th May 2009, the group has been in much demand by audiences here and in the United States. The dancers were even invited to perform in front of Gordon Brown in Downing Street. Whether overcome by the aura of magisterial splendour emanating from the Prime Minister or simply as a result of an imperfection in the road surface in front of number 10, star dancer Perri Luc Kiely managed to fall on his head while attempting a backwards somersault. He later made a full recovery after being taken inside by Gordon and Sarah Brown and treated by a nurse. Gordon Brown said later that Perri Luc is 'a wonderful guy'. So now you know. If you want to get your views across to the Prime Minister, all you have to do is dance a jig in Downing Street and fall over backwards. Of course, like Perri Luc you might have to be 13 years old to be taken seriously.

11. SatNav News

Following last week's article on the failure of satellite navigation systems to recognise new roads in East Kent, we received this report from one Chamber member. "I was driving from Manston towards Westwood Cross intending to continue towards Broadstairs when my brand new factory-fitted SatNav told me, 'Now, go straight'. I think it only fair to point out that I have never been involved in any form of criminal activity all my life, not even a parking fine. To be instructed in a mid Atlantic accent by a disembodied voice to 'Go straight' was something of a shock. I thought I had a vicar in the car". We have heard of similar reports from SatNav users in the district. Our only comment is that the real criminals are unlikely to take any notice and it is the honest citizens who suffer the inconvenience. Now, where have we heard that before?

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 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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It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.
For details of membership, email admin@tekc.co.uk

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