

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

27th February 2010

1. Dreamland Wakes Up

The new Dreamland Trust Project Director, Jonathan Bryant, will be outlining plans to restore Dreamland as “the world's first heritage amusement park” at a Thanet & East Kent Chamber business breakfast on Wednesday 24th March 2010. With the project already underway following the award last November of £3.7m by the Department for Culture Media and Sport, Jonathan will outline the latest details that promise to give a huge boost to in-bound tourism in Thanet. Widely viewed as the ideal man for the job, Jonathan brings with him senior management experience at Birmingham's Thinktank Science Museum, the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust, Dundee's Contemporary Art Gallery and a host of community initiatives. He is convinced that the new Dreamland should be run ‘as a business that stands on its own two feet’. Local businesses are set to benefit significantly from the increased footfall and raised profile. The Dreamland Wakes Up business breakfast will start at 0730 hrs at the Fayrency Hotel, Kingsgate, near Broadstairs. Tickets cost £12.00 for Chamber members and £15.00 for non-members. Payment is accepted in cash or by cheque on the door. To book a place, email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line ‘Dreamland Breakfast’ and the names of those wishing to attend. Non-members should give full company contact details.

2. It's Free and It's Available Now

Chamber member, John Harrington of Harrington Associates, is offering Chamber members a free business health check to prepare themselves for the spring and summer season. As John puts it, ‘Every business that has made it this far should be making sure that it has the tank full and the resources to go the final mile; many will be faced with challenges they have not come across before and could, without taking the appropriate action, bring down an otherwise potentially successful company.’ In an email to the Thanet & East Kent Chamber, John offers to discuss any aspects of business in complete confidence and to produce a ‘bullet point summary of the key aspects and what should be focused on going forward.’ This Chamber has heard first class reports of the assistance that John has given to local companies including reducing one firm's inventory from £60,000 to £2,000 with significant associated cost savings. Reducing costs and increasing turnover for members are key objectives and of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and we are happy to recommend John's services. Chamber members are invited to drop him a line by email to johnharrington@iib.ws or give him a call on 07810 713023.

3. Cheque It Out

Our friends at the Federation of Small Businesses have drawn our attention to the possible removal of cheques from the banking system. Malcolm Bennett advises us that at least one bank is withdrawing cheque guarantee cards from 22 March 2010 which he feels will accelerate the departure of the paying facility on which many small companies depend. He advocates action now. Petitions on the Number 10 website require 500 signatures to pass the necessary threshold to generate an official response. If you feel strongly about this issue, you might like to add your name to some of the recognisable ones from the East Kent coastal business community who have already given their support by clicking on the link at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/KEEP-CHEQUES/> You have until 12 April 2010 to register. At the time of writing, 77 signatures are listed.

4. Jersey, Bergerac and Wham!

Fans of Bergerac the TV series that ran for ten years and eighty-seven episodes until 1991 will be delighted to know that flights to Jersey are available from 29th May to 11 September from Kent International Airport at Manston and every Saturday from 10 July to 11 September from London Ashford Airport at Lydd. Both of these East Kent airports offer easy access and on-site parking with few of the anxieties or delays associated with Gatwick and Heathrow. The Jersey-based C. I. Travel Group is convinced that the new service will find a ready client base. Managing Director, Robert Mackenzie, bases his conclusion on ‘many more holiday makers deserting the Euro-zone in favour of a holiday closer to home’. Jo Oliver of Lydd Airport sees the initiative as a ‘fantastic opportunity for both the airport and communities across Kent and East Sussex’. Star of the Bergerac series, John Nettles, is more familiar today as Detective Chief Inspector Tom Barnaby in Midsomer Murders, but die-hard fans of his efforts in the lower ranks in Jersey will have no difficulty in recognising St Helier's Royal Square and the scenes where Jim Bergerac and millionaire Charlie Hungerford (Terence Alexander) enjoyed their humorous banter. Jersey is a small island measuring around nine miles by five. As a Crown Dependency, Jersey has a Lieutenant Governor, Andrew Ridgway. This former Colonel of the Royal Tank Regiment should not be confused with Andrew Ridgely who sang in Wham! with George Michael. Early arrivals at the airport are not encouraged to sing ‘Wake Me Up Before You Go Go.’ To book your flights to Jersey, telephone 0844 415 6653 for Lydd flights or 0871 282 08996 for Manston.

5. Bye-Bye Sick Notes

We have been advised by the Department for Work and Pensions that sick-note culture is due for a radical change. From 6 April 2010, sick notes will be replaced by fit notes with doctors instructed to advise if a patient may be fit for work and to offer advice on the effects of their health condition. We learn that ‘Doctors will have the option to advise that their patient would be able to work, subject to the employer's agreement, if temporary changes such as reduced working hours or amended duties could be accommodated.’ The government estimates that the British economy will benefit by £240m over the next ten years. Doctors will

be able to advise that a worker claiming to be sick may still attend the workplace with the agreement of the employer subject to certain conditions such as altered hours, amended duties, workplace adaptations or a phased return to work. For information on how the new system might affect your business, see www.dwp.gov.uk/fitnote for details.

6. How To Promote Your Business

The Thanet Business Exhibition, open to all East Kent Companies, will take place at Westwood Cross, Broadstairs on 11 June 2010. The 2010 Chamber Golf Day will be at the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club on 8 October 2010. For details of both events, contact the Thanet & East Kent Marketing & Membership Officer, Graham Rayner, by telephone to 078998 73535.

7. Save Energy, Save Costs

The British Chambers of Commerce has launched a partnership with the Carbon Trust to promote energy savings. Loans of between £3,000 and £500,000 are available for energy saving equipment that is intended to pay its way within four years from purchase. Details are available at <http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/energysavinghub> The Thanet & East Kent Chamber membership includes a variety of specialists in cost reduction, all of whom offer a free initial consultation. For more information, email admin@tekc.co.uk with the subject line 'Energy Cost Reduction'.

8. Pensions

Mick Rendell of Chamber member Acorn Bowman FIM Limited reminds us that there is no limit to the amount you can contribute to pensions but there is a limit on the amount of contribution that can benefit from tax relief and this will be the greater of £3,600 or 100% of your relevant UK earnings, subject to the new rules for higher earners. Mick is happy to advise on the level of contribution necessary to fund for specific pension and tax-free lump sum benefits. He notes that any personal contributions would be paid net of basic rate tax, with any higher rate tax relief being obtained via a self assessment tax return. Individual Savings Accounts limits will be raised to £10,200 from £7,200 from 6 April 2010. Anyone over 50 years old could have benefited from the higher rates since 6 October 2009. Mick would be pleased to discuss your particular needs and can be reached by email to m.rendell@abfim.com or by telephone to 01843 609365.

9. Office Supplies Offer

David Burgess of Chamber member Eurostat Office Supplies has a special offer for readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider. During the month of March 2010 he promises, 'Buy 3 items from a long list of everyday products and you will get the cheapest item free of charge'. Too good to be true? Email David to david@eurostat.co.uk or telephone him on 01843 580960 for the good news. You might like to mention that you read about the offer in the Thanet & East Kent Insider.

10. PAYE Up or Else

We are grateful to Mark Hurdman of Levicks Chartered Accountants for alerting our readers to the penalties that HM Revenue and Customs will start to charge for late PAYE payments. Mark writes that 'The penalties will be a percentage of the amount paid late starting at 1% increasing to 4% depending on the number of late payments in the year. There will also be penalties of 5% if any of the PAYE due is still not paid after 6 months and again after 12 months.' Mark continues by giving us chapter and verse on the payment deadlines which will be '22nd of the month when paying electronically, 19th of the month when paying by cheque. If, however, these dates fall on a weekend or bank holiday your payment needs to reach HMRC by the last working day before deadline. If the amount you pay is likely to average less than £1,500 a month you can opt to pay quarterly.' Still confused? Give Mark a call on 01843 862716 for an explanation.

11. Vacancies for Jobs in Thanet

Jo Moore, Children's Services Coordinator at East Kent Mencap, tells us of two vacancies following the award of £4.9m by the Big Lottery Young People's Fund. There is a full-time post as Regional Coordinator and a part-time position as Regional Learning Disability Consultant. For details and job descriptions, see www.mencap.org.uk/jobs. Readers are reminded that the following Chamber members specialise in finding key employees with the right skills, experience and background. Adecco Recruitment tel: 01843 609292; Connexions Partnership Kent & Medway Ltd tel: 01622 607578; HRGO tel: 01843 591798; Maximus Employment & Training tel: 01843 808410; Medics on the Move tel: 01843 599918; Morgan Jones Recruitment Consultants Ltd tel: 01843 604890; ILM tel: 01843 861616 and TNG (Avanta Enterprises) tel: 01843 570250;

12. Flybe Flight Stimulator

The imminent prospect of £24.99 flights operated by Flybe to Edinburgh from Kent International Airport at Manston, as reported in last week's Thanet & East Kent Insider, has stimulated a lively correspondence from the membership. This has included general comments on flying such as 'it was an optimist who invented the aeroplane and a pessimist who invented the parachute'. Closer to the route in question was an email from a regular air passenger who gave a remarkable account of an announcement on an aeroplane landing in Scotland. Allegedly, a stewardess is reported to have said over the microphone, 'Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Glasgow, we hope you enjoyed your flight and thank you for flying Easyjet. If you didn't enjoy your flight, thank you for flying Ryanair.' Both these companies have featured in the news recently and not just in the travel section. The recent spat following the publication by Ryanair of an advert featuring Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannu as Pinocchio is perhaps unlikely to be resolved by Ryan Air Chief Executive Michael Ryan's challenge to Sir Stelios to a race around Trafalgar Square or a bout of Sumo wrestling. Flybe may not appear in the gossip columns as often as some of its rivals, but it flies to more UK airports than any other airline. Flybe's Chief Commercial Officer, Mike Rutter, contented himself with a relatively sedate comment on the new East

Kent destination, 'We expect our new route to be popular both with business travellers and with those planning their holidays or weekends away and wanting their budgets to go as far as possible and we'd advise people to book early to take advantage of the lowest possible fares.' There's no invitation to mud-wrestling there and not a word about racing around Ramsgate harbour in the nude. But then, as the former Group Marketing Director for Securicor and the UK Head of Marketing for Ray-Ban sunglasses, Mike Rutter knows how to stay safe and play it cool at the same time. The lad will go far.

13. 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

Thanet & East Kent Chamber Limited

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