

THE CHAMBER

THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR **EAST CHESHIRE**

April 2012 / Issue 37



**FANTASTIC EVENING
AT THIS YEAR'S
CHAMBER AWARDS**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANDY PEAR

Winner of Business Person
of the Year Award 2012

ANNUAL GOLF DAY

12th June 2012 at Wychwood Park
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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Congleton Link Road : **Business Awards 2012** and more...

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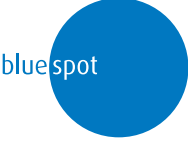


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Meet the Chamber Team



David Watson
Chief Executive



Jackie Randles
Office Manager



Marie Shenton
Chairman



Tim McCloud
Board Member



David Gladman
Board Member



John Davies
Board Member



Dermot Callinan
Board Member



George Hayes
Board Member

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Chairman's Comments

"The best awards night ever" The feedback I have personally received has been incredibly positive and full of praise for the Chamber. An event like this takes an enormous amount of effort and planning, so my thanks goes to the whole team and specifically David and Jackie for a first class event.

It is great to see there are so many good news stories, from businesses throughout East Cheshire. The Chamber is proud to support all our members and continues to be proactive in the events and assistance it provides, we aim to make a real difference in these tough times.

As you will see from the various articles in this edition of the Chamber magazine we have a very busy programme of events for the next couple of months starting with the next Network event on the 9th May and the golf day on the 12th of June. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Marie Shenton
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise

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Contact Us:
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jackie.randles@eastcheshirechamber.co.uk

EVENTS CALENDAR

May
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Cheshire East Council – Free Event
The Business Hub 10am – 11am
Industry Insiders Presentation 11am – 12noon
Networking Meeting and Light Lunch 12noon – 2pm
9th May 2012 Riverside Mill, Congleton

Apexselling Master Class
Master Class in Advanced Sales
10th May 2012 9am – 5pm

Olympic Torch in Congleton
31st May 2012

June
East Cheshire Chamber Golf Day
12th June 2012 Wychwood Park, Crewe

July
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Networking Meeting
18th July 2012 11.30am – 2.00pm Venue to be confirmed

September
Chamber Open Day
26th September 2012 11.00am – 19.00pm Riverside Mill, Congleton

October
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Networking Meeting
24th October 2012 11.30am – 2.00pm Venue to be confirmed

December
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Christmas Luncheon
7th December 2012 Pecks Restaurant, Congleton

A GREAT RECEPTION FOR PLUS DANE

tmc
STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATIONS



NEIGHBOURHOOD INVESTOR, PLUS DANE GROUP, IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF TMC STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE CREATIVE CONCEPT, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE OFFICE RECEPTION AREAS.

Paula Ellis, Customer Access Manager for Plus Dane, explained that it was TMC's innovative approach to the project that made them stand out. She commented:

"It was important that we listened and accounted for the needs of both staff and customers coming into our offices to make sure that our reception areas offer a high quality working environment and a welcoming and easily accessible first point of contact for residents."

"To help achieve this, we set up a working group of staff and tenants to actively take part in the selection process. This group will continue to be involved, as the concepts evolve into the final reception areas, ensuring that the designs work across all six sites."

As part of the project, TMC MD, Tim McCloud, and designer, Adam Smith, visited all of the offices and spoke with the staff about how they felt about their current office environment; discussing with them how the new designs and layouts could improve their workplace and make the environments more inviting for customers.

Tim explained: "As well as creating consistency across all sites and reflecting the Plus Dane brand, the new reception areas had to have the right balance of practicality and creativity - It is all about 'people' - for the staff that work there and customers that visit the offices."

Mike Doran, Managing Director of the Plus Dane Group, added: "I am delighted that the tender has been won by a local business, it's great to see members of the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce working together."



plus dane group

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www.neighbourhoodinvestor.com



Mark Fahy, Head of UK Small & Mid-Cap Companies - Equity Primary Markets
London Stock Exchange

AIM, LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE'S WORLD LEADING PUBLIC MARKET FOR GROWTH-ORIENTATED BUSINESS

In the current climate, is floating on AIM becoming an increasingly attractive way of raising finance for business leaders?

Since its launch in 1995, over 3,200 companies have chosen to join AIM, so we have a strong track record of helping companies raise capital. AIM not only offers companies good opportunities for growth at admission but also access to a unique community of investors and analysts throughout their life as a public company. NWF Group, based in Nantwich, and Advanced Medical Solutions, based in Winsford, have both been long-standing, successful AIM companies. Raising equity through a public quote rather than debt funding is an attractive proposition to SMEs looking to grow and expand their business. Since inception, AIM has been a very attractive market for growth companies looking to raise finance.

How can AIM help a company to grow?

The public funding markets are a core ongoing source of capital for businesses: investors who are convinced by a company's performance and prospects are often willing to support it by buying into further share issues in the months and years after it has listed. To date, companies on our growth market, AIM, have raised a total of £35 billion in capital at admission and followed this with further fundraising amounting to £43 billion. This demonstrates the vital role AIM plays in supporting the growth strategies of firms after their IPO and then throughout their life as public companies, for example, Advanced Medical Solutions raised £34m in December 2011 to help part fund their acquisition of Resorba.

Is the national or even international exposure that joining AIM gives companies a significant factor in increasing their chances of expanding / winning investment and new larger clients?

The advantages of an IPO on the London Stock Exchange's markets should also not be viewed in purely cash terms. A UK listing gives a company the opportunity to raise its profile by being listed alongside its global peers. London also hosts the largest, most internationally-focussed financial community in the world, and it is this community of experts that support companies from many countries and sectors. In this environment, companies seeking to make their mark are given a significant boost simply by being on market: they gain exposure to a broad and deep institutional investor base, and sit alongside sector leaders from all over the world.

Since the recession and the widespread call for more transparency in the finance sector, have there been or will there be any major changes to the way AIM operates?

AIM continues to be the world's most successful growth market for SMEs offering a platform for companies to raise capital within a tailored and balanced regulatory framework. We continue to work hard to make sure it remains an environment which balances the needs of growing companies with investor confidence. In March 2011, AIM successfully lobbied on behalf of SMEs, increasing the qualifying limits for Venture Capital Trust (VCT) investment, leading to greater support for growth companies seeking investment.

What are some of the common misgivings held by SME bosses that are reluctant to take the plunge and go public? What would you say to counterbalance those views?

Going public is a big decision and a very significant step. To help companies achieve the best possible results, AIM is supported by a large and highly experienced community of expert advisers, ranging from Nomads and brokers to accountants, lawyers and public relations and investor relations firms. The success of AIM is largely due to the dedication and professionalism of these advisers. This means all companies that choose AIM have access to high-quality advice and support from the beginning of their life as a public company. If a business is considering a flotation they can contact any of these advisors who will offer them expert help and advice on the process.

What are the risks of joining AIM and how can a company assess whether the rewards are worth it?

Deciding on an IPO is of course a very important decision and one which should be discussed at length, and considered carefully. Public company life is not suited to all businesses, but the strength of the UK public markets and its financial community means there is an exceptional infrastructure to help a firm decide, and to implement their strategy if it decides it should be the next step. If you are an ambitious and growing company, AIM is an attractive route to a public quote on one of the world's most prestigious markets. ■

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY!



Congleton resident Elaine Elkin and husband John (a former Chamber Director) are raising funds for research at the Kidney Unit at Manchester Royal infirmary, where Elaine had a transplant in November last year.

Elaine received a new kidney from her son Chris and she and John are challenging themselves to raise as much as possible by undertaking a "Transplant Trek" of 125 miles over 10 days in May in the Lake District where the total height to be climbed is equivalent to nearly one and a half times Everest.

They have received great support from East Cheshire Chamber; Stock at the Pavilion; Myers & Co Solicitors; Congleton Chronicle; Congleton Town Council; Congleton Tourist Information Centre; Bellboy Printers; Philip Barber Butchers and last but not least Stephen Sebire.

Any money you feel able to give will make a difference and be much appreciated. Donations can be made online at: www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/ElaineandJohn



Nick Bailey

PERSONAL PROPERTY BEING STOLEN

We are currently receiving reports that mobile phones & other personal property is being stolen from members of the public whilst visiting shops and businesses within the East Cheshire Area.

The offenders are described as Eastern European nationals who are entering premises and asking for directions or attempting to sell them goods.

One of the methods being used by the offenders is that they will place a map or leaflets on top of the victim's phone or property. They then distract them with questions and will then take the mobile phone from under the items they have placed above before quickly making their excuses and leaving in a waiting vehicle.

They have been described as being of Eastern European appearance. THE MALES ARE SMARTLY DRESSED, AGED BETWEEN 30 YRS – 50 YRS and the FEMALES OFTEN WILL BE WEARING HEADSCARFS, LONG SKIRTS AND DISTINCTIVE ITEMS OF JEWELLERY, AGED BETWEEN 30 YRS – 50 YRS

If you see or suspect this happening then please contact Cheshire Police on 999 or 101 immediately. If they leave obtain a description and if possible a vehicle along with the number plate and make and model and direction they have headed.



Mark Gammage, Cheshire Constabulary

'CUSTOMERS ARE F.I.C.K.L.E™'

'Customers are F.I.C.K.L.E™' is a brand new book written by Nick Bailey MBA DipM FCIM FlntSMM which will be published on April 23rd 2012. The main theme of this cutting edge sales book is 'how to find, develop and close high value complex deals' in any market sector.

LAUNCH OF CHESHIRE SKILLSHARE IN CONGLETON

The Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire, Mr David Briggs, launched Cheshire SkillShare in Congleton to a group of business and charity executives at the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

This new initiative matches local business and professional people who want to volunteer their skills with voluntary, community and faith groups who need these skills. It is, in effect, a brokerage to find business people who want to give back to the local community and charities who need specific skills to improve their effectiveness.

The level of support is flexible and can be as much or as little as both parties are comfortable with. A wide range of skills are needed by the community, including:

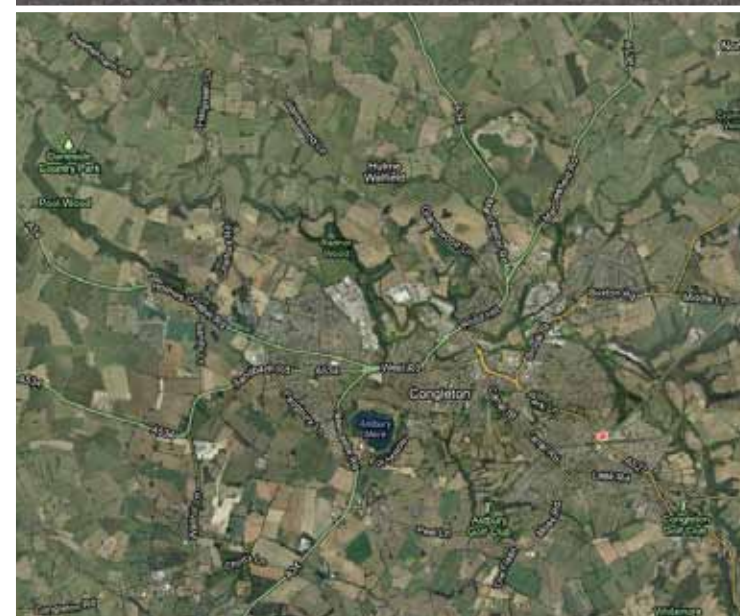
- Marketing and Promotion
- Business Planning
- IT support and web advice
- Human Resources
- Legal expertise
- Event management
- Accountancy... and much more.

David Briggs said - "I have been hugely impressed, as I have visited companies around Cheshire over the last two years, to discover that most companies really want to give something back to the local community. Cheshire SkillShare acts as a bridge between the business and the charity and as a result harnesses the huge pool of good will and expertise which is available in the business and professional world and makes it available to help the community."

The Housing Association Plus Dane have seconded one of their executives to Cheshire SkillShare to launch the project in Congleton and business or voluntary groups which would like more information should contact Denis Hogg on denis.hogg@neighbourhoodinvestor.com



Covering the entire life cycle from 'Finding to 'Expanding a business, this book provides readers with a concise, focused and easy to read guidance on how to win consistently in this extremely challenging arena.



CONGLETON LINK ROAD

CONGLETON IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE KEY TOWNS IN CHESHIRE EAST WITH SOME MAJOR BUSINESSES AND A STRONG COMMUNITY, HOWEVER THE FUTURE PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN IS BEING HINDERED BY ACCESS AND CONGESTION.

Following recent Cheshire East Council Neighbourhood Planning meetings business leaders were voicing the need to re open the debate for a Congleton Link Road or By Pass. Whilst some felt that it had little chance of it being delivered there was a strong claim that if Crewe, Sandbach and Alderley Edge could attract funding why not Congleton? Cheshire East Council was encouraged through this process to further investigate potential routes and provide indicative costs for its delivery.

It is generally recognised by business leaders that economic growth is being stifled in Congleton due to the lack of suitable employment sites as well as general access to the town centre. A new link road would ease access through the town and open up opportunities to expand existing and develop new employment sites for Congleton.

Whilst an exact route would need to be determined the principle of creating a link road from the north to the west of the town appears to be a favoured option.

The recently formed Link 2 Prosperity group recognises the need for these improvements for the town and is looking to canvas the support from other business in and around Congleton. The evidenced demand and support will be a key element in the process of lobbying Central Government for significant investment into Congleton. Should there be significant investment there will there be the opportunity to retain and grow existing businesses but Congleton will be in a stronger position to attract investment into the town.

Link 2 Prosperity has met with the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and it has been agreed that they will receive and collate the business responses on behalf of the group.

**We would be grateful if you could forward your written responses to -
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
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TIM MCCLLOUD, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TMC STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS NEW INITIATIVE, 'THE CLUB' IS A COST EFFECTIVE WAY FOR SMEs TO HAVE REGULAR ACCESS TO EXPERIENCED MARKETEERS, WHO WILL TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND, ADVISE AND SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH.

Tim explained that feedback from existing customers has been the catalyst for 'The Club', with businesses regularly requesting marketing advice and support from TMC.

He went on to say that, as well as 1:1 consultancy, bimonthly workshops providing guidance on current marketing issues will be held for Club members. Club members will also receive telephone support and discounted rates on all services offered by TMC.

As a Chamber member, TMC are offering a discounted rate of £100.00 per month for the first 50 applicants with just one month's notice if members wish to cancel.

To find out more or to join 'The Club' please contact Tim McCloud on 01260 295 700 or tim@wearetmc.co.uk

www.wearetmc.co.uk

EAST CHESHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CHARITY OF THE YEAR

FRIENDS FOR LEISURE PROVIDING FRIENDSHIP AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES TO DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Friends for Leisure are delighted that they have been voted Charity of the Year by the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and thank those who nominated the charity. We look forward very much to developing additional relationships with the business sector. We work closely with businesses to help make their services more accessible for people with disabilities and to purchase the services they supply. Last year's many activities from commercial organisations included tennis coaching and a demonstration of bread-making.

Disabled children are often denied the opportunity to develop real friendships and independence. They feel the same need to integrate with their peers as other children but are simply unable to take part in the social activities that are so vital to growing up.

We give disabled children and young people opportunities to build real friendships and achieve meaningful independence. With the help of a dedicated and well-trained team of young volunteers, we provide regular group activities, youth clubs, ten-pin bowling, drama, and one-off activities in the school holidays. We run a carefully structured befriending service for individual young people. Our children and young people learn social skills, develop self-confidence and feel more integrated into the community.



VOLUNTEERING - IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SHOPS!

FRIENDS FOR LEISURE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO BEFRIEND OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND JOIN THEM IN THEIR CHOSEN LEISURE ACTIVITIES—DO YOU KNOW A YOUNG PERSON WHO MIGHT LIKE TO BE INVOLVED?

We want to recruit additional trustees to provide the strategic direction and overall management. We are working to build a team of community fundraisers who like to be involved in social activities. Please call for a chat if you are interested in joining us on 01260 275333 or visit us at Albert Chambers, Canal Street, Congleton CW12 4AA

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WWW.FRIENDSFORLEISURE.ORG.UK



EAST CHESHIRE CHAMBER ANNUAL GOLF DAY

Tuesday 12th June 2012 Midday onwards
Wychwood Park Golf Club, Crewe
European PGA Tour Championship Course

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BUSINESS AWARDS | 2012 |

CELEBRATING EAST CHESHIRE BUSINESS SUCCESS DISTINGUISHED GUESTS COMMEMORATE A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR OUTSTANDING COMPANY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE REGION.

Hundreds of Cheshire's finest businessmen and women packed into Cranage Hall in Holmes Chapel on 30th March for the annual East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. Now in their seventh year, the awards have established themselves at the forefront of the Cheshire business calendar, with over 50 different companies in attendance. It was a record-breaking year, with over 280 people celebrating the successes and achievements of others, and a record amount of nominations.

The atmosphere in the room was absolutely buzzing and the passion and enthusiasm of the guests was astonishing to see, confirming that East Cheshire is well and truly open for business. To add to the prestige of the evening, constituency MP Fiona Bruce, Deputy Mayor of Cheshire East, Councillor George Walton and Congleton Town Mayor Councillor Doug Parker were also present to enjoy the event.

The evening was hosted by the Chief Executive of East Cheshire Chamber, David Watson along with Office Manager of the Chamber Jackie Randles and Managing Director of TMC Creative, Tim McCloud. Speaking at the event, David Watson said:

"...it was a great evening once again, on friday night, well organised, good location, nice food and fun! Thanks for all your help & support over the past year..."

Joanne Speed
Visyon

“It has been extremely rewarding for those of us who have visited companies during this judging process. The enthusiasm and quality of the businesses that we have seen has been truly second to none. There is no recessionary doom and gloom here tonight; we are here to celebrate the outstanding success of our local business economy.”

There were a total of 15 awards, presented to businesses from local to international level.



"Thank you for such a good evening on Friday. It was an excellent night and everyone on CEC table really enjoyed themselves."

Jacqueline Wilson
Cheshire East Council



"Congratulations on putting together another excellent awards dinner. The attendance was incredible and everyone I spoke to had a great night - as I did"

Dermot Callinan
Myers & Co



"Once again this year, a great evening and please pass our congratulations and thanks to all those involved. Great venue, great food and above all a great 'vibe'. Great Job"

Tim Crighton
County Insurance Group



"I just wanted to express my appreciation for all your hard work putting on such a successful event - the atmosphere was wonderful and we really enjoyed the evening"

Rosemary Millican
Belvoir Macclesfield



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AND THE WINNERS ARE...

| 2012 |

THE WINNERS



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GREEN CONTRACT SERVICES
Environmental Company of the Year

PLUS DANE GROUP
Customer Care Award



HAMMOND MCNULTY
Provider of Professional Services Award

GENESYS INTERNATIONAL
Special Achievement Award

SES GROUP
Exporter of the Year



DV8 BAR
New Business of the Year

FRIENDS FOR LEISURE
Charity of the Year Award

INDUSTRY INSIDERS
Congleton Enterprise



DEAVILLE & CO
Small Business of the Year

CONGLETON BEARTOWN
Leisure & Tourism Award

8TH PLANET
Retailer of the Year



MCGREGORS
Chamber Business Partner

ANDY PEAR
Business Person of the Year

COUNTY INSURANCE GROUP
Business of the Year



GEMINI INTERNATIONAL ORGANISE PRESTIGIOUS GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONGRESS 2012

Congleton based global events company, Gemini International, recently organised the prestigious Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2012, the largest international gathering of start-up champions. Coming to Europe for the first time, the Congress was staged in Liverpool from 9th to 16th March and served as an inspirational celebration of entrepreneurship.

The main Congress Summit on 13 March 2012 attracted an impressive line-up of speakers, including Sir Richard Branson, Martha Lane Fox, Sir Terry Leahy and Lord Heseltine, with comedian John Bishop and Liverpool FC Managing Director Ian Ayre closing the event.

Gemini International was appointed as the official Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) by Liverpool Vision, the city's economic development agency and the Kauffman Foundation from Washington DC. Managing the overall planning and delivery of the core events, including arrangements for speakers and over 3,000 delegates from 120 countries, Gemini engaged strategic partners to support the multi-faceted event, including creative input from John Macaulay at Manchester-based Alchemy Agency.

The week-long festival closed with a spectacular Gala Dinner in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral, attended by 700 guests, with entertainment from Beatles tribute band, the Backbeat Beatles and RARE Performing Arts Studio featuring songs from a new musical 'A Bard Day's Night'.

The Congress gained national and international coverage in The Economist, Globo, Sky News, Channel 4 News, BBC Radio 4 and Santiago TV, cementing Liverpool's reputation as an emerging enterprise hub.

“It was a privilege to be appointed as PCO for the GEC and the tremendous success of the event in Liverpool was tribute to the dedication of the team who worked on the project for the last 10 months. We are delighted to have been approached by the hosts of the 2013 GEC, to be held in Rio de Janeiro and look forward to the opportunity of supporting the event in Brazil.”

Christine Kelly
Managing Director of Gemini International

PRISM KEEPS IT IN THE COMMUNITY



Users of Congleton Learning Centre now have additional equipment to facilitate their learning thanks to the generous donation of two high specification, refurbished laptops presented to staff at their recent "Love Your Learning Centre" open day.

The laptops were donated by Congleton-based Prism IT Disposal which offers a complete recycling and refurbishment programme to divert used IT equipment away from landfill. Where refurbishment is possible Prism undertake the necessary work and then make sure that the recycled IT equipment goes to good use within the local community.

LEXCEL SUCCESS

Poole Alcock was delighted to be awarded Lexcel accreditation in November, 2011. Lexcel is the Law Society's international practice management standard of excellence in legal practice.

Lexcel is not just another "badge" - it is a scheme for legal practices which certifies that certain standards have been met following an independent assessment. Lexcel accredited practices undergo rigorous independent assessment every year to ensure that they meet required standards of excellence in areas such as client care, case management and risk management. It is only awarded to solicitors who meet the highest management and customer care standards. This view is supported by Sir Stephen Lander, Independent Commissioner to the Law Society who comments "Lexcel accredited firms have 40% fewer complaints to the Law Society, per fee earner, than non-accredited firms."

Poole Alcock believes that the Lexcel standard reflects what law firms should be doing to run their businesses efficiently and effectively and provides a good discipline to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to adopt best practice. Scott Harding, the Risk Management Partner for Poole Alcock commented, "Poole Alcock has been committed to achieving Lexcel accreditation as part of our strategy for continuing to improve the service which we provide to our clients. The Lexcel quality mark assures clients that they can expect services of consistently high quality and accordingly, we are delighted to have been awarded this accreditation."

If you would like more information about the services offered by Poole Alcock, please do not hesitate to give us a call or visit our website at www.poolealcock.co.uk

A keen supporter of adult education within the community, Prism also provides free IT support to the Learning Centre, allowing staff to focus on what they do best; supporting adults with a wide range of courses enabling them to gain new skills and qualifications.

Prism's valuable support was recognised by Fiona Bruce, MP for Congleton, who visited the Love Your Learning Centre open day and commented: "Prism proves in more ways than one that we should buy from local businesses because the money you spend with them stays in the community."



David Watson

Comments

Once again the business awards were a fantastic evening celebrating the success of so many businesses from across Cheshire East. The only difference this year was that they were the most successful yet, with over 280 people sitting down to a sumptuous meal at Cranage Hall. Judging this year was an even greater challenge as the Chamber received nearly 80 nominations across the various categories. It goes to prove that Cheshire East is not only open for business, but doing the business!

The next big event will be the Chamber Golf Day at Wychwood Park on Tuesday 12th June. Blue Bell BMW Crewe will again be the major sponsor of the event and this year there will be a major prize for "nearest the pin" rather than a car on 17th for a hole in one. That means that someone will take home a fantastic prize of a special "track day" at Oulton Park and the chance to take to the track driving a BMW M3 and a F1 style single seater race car.

As Friends For Leisure won the charity award at the recent business awards they now become our charity of the year and we will be supporting them with our raffles and auctions at the various events over the next year. You can find out a bit more information on Friends For Leisure on page 8 of this magazine.

There is also good news to report on membership with 19 new members being featured on page 15 and new Patrons too. Our continuing growth in numbers is very encouraging and will give the Chamber the strength to deliver services to our members. If you would like further information on the Chamber call me on 01260 540 570 or e-mail me at david.watson@eastcheshirechamber.co.uk

David Watson



NETWORK MEETING 1ST FEBRUARY 2012

David Watson, Chief Executive of East Cheshire Chamber welcomed over 65 members, business colleagues and members of Cheshire East Council to the network meeting on the 1st February 2012 at Riverside Mill in Congleton.

At the meeting Cheshire East Council presented their Draft Business Plan and explained the challenges that the Cheshire East Council face, their revenue and capital proposals for the next three years, the impact on businesses and provided an update on Business Rate issues.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Michael Jones and representatives from the Management Team made the presentation and invited attendees to ask questions. Brampton Recruitment Ltd, Keen Pharmacy and WPA went 'Under the Spotlight' to give a three minute presentation about their business.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK AT THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Congleton's Beartown Apprenticeship Scheme was shown off in Parliament when the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce met with MP's during national apprenticeship week.

Chief Executive of the chamber, David Watson said "I was invited by Congleton MP Fiona Bruce to a meeting of the All Party Small Business Group for a meeting" "The speaker was a minister for further education, skills and lifelong learning, John Hayes MP"

"I was asked to share information about the Beartown Apprenticeship scheme. The scheme is magic for young people and it is great for local employers" Under the scheme, Plus Dane housing association helps businesses recruit apprentices.

They will help write the advert, compile candidate shortlists and help with interviews to recruit paid apprentices. The apprentice will also get advice and guidance and will have access to a personal mentor and access to free courses.

For more information contact Lisa Crisford at Plus Dane on 01260 288256.



EXPORT ADVICE SEMINAR

Exporting goods from Congleton around the world could massively boost local economy, according to speakers at a seminar.

East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce recently held a free seminar on exporting at Riverside in Congleton, attended by 15 local businesses. They were given advice on how to export their

products and learned that businesses that do export have a 12% higher "survival" rate than those that don't.

Among guest speakers were Damien Glover form Lloyds TSB and David Cant, managing director of Albion Overseas, who gave a talk on exporting to Russia.

A warm welcome to our New Members



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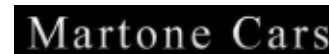
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CHESHIRE EAST NEWS

OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY 31 MAY 2012

Congleton Area - Notice of Road Closures

On the morning of 31 May 2012 the Olympic Torch Relay will pass through Cheshire East. The Council in conjunction with the Police have taken the decision to close roads where the Olympic Flame is being carried by Torchbearers as it passes through Congleton.

The Council is dedicated to protecting the public and making this once in a lifetime opportunity safe and enjoyable for all Cheshire East residents; but we are also aiming to keep disruption to a minimum. Refuse collections and public transport will be significantly disrupted as a result of the road closures as will access to some railway stations including Crewe station; we therefore recommend allowing plenty of time to make any journey during the morning.

Congleton - list of roads to be closed approx. 7:45 – 10:25am:

- A534 Sandbach Road
- A34 Rood Hill
- A34 West Road
- A536 Macclesfield Road
- A34 Clayton By-pass



Please Note

There will be no access to the roads listed above from any side roads or at any junctions. We are closing the roads for the safety of both participants and spectators and we will do our utmost to reduce the disruption by reopening the roads as soon as it is safe to do so. Please refer to map overleaf for the specific sections of roads to be closed.

Travelling to view the Torch

We would encourage people to walk or cycle to see the Torch Relay wherever possible. For those who are travelling in their own vehicle we would encourage you to set off early to ensure you get to your destination in plenty of time. We would also ask that vehicles are not parked along the route, which could cause disruption to the Relay. Please park in off street car parks wherever possible.

Road safety

We would ask that spectators ensure that they look after their own and fellow spectators safety while attending the Torch Relay. Spectators should stay out of the road during the event.

Thank you for your co-operation.

For more details visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/2012
Or call: 0300 123 50 35

SUPERFAST BROADBAND TRANSFORMING BUSINESSES & COMMUNITIES ACROSS CHESHIRE

A billion pound boost to the economy, thousands of local jobs created and better communication for businesses – just some of benefits superfast broadband can bring to the sub-region.

The Connecting Cheshire partnership made up of the four local authorities covering east and west Cheshire, Warrington and Halton aim to ensure everyone has access to superfast broadband by 2015. The partnership has so far received more than £3 million in Government funding for the roll-out of superfast broadband but needs up to £40 million in order for the project to reach its potential. To do this, Connecting Cheshire hopes to attract further funding from the Government and European grants to ensure full coverage of superfast broadband across the sub-region.

A recently commissioned value and impact study predicted that over 15 years, full superfast broadband coverage could result in gross economic and social impact of £1.3 million and create 11,000 jobs. This would include the creation of 3,000 jobs across rural and semi-rural areas across Cheshire, Warrington and Halton.

Currently BT Openreach and Virgin Media are rolling out superfast broadband to many towns and villages across Cheshire, Warrington and Halton; however over 110,000 homes and businesses are classified as uneconomic to upgrade and will remain on slower broadband services, particularly in outlying rural areas. Securing funding to bridge this gap and provide superfast broadband to these areas is the key economic and social objective of the Connecting Cheshire Strategy.

For more information and to get involved visit: www.connectingcheshire.org.uk



COUNTY INSURANCE RAISE MONEY FOR THE RNLI SOS DAY

County Insurance (www.countyins.com) – with offices in both Crewe and Southport – invited their staff to dress up with a nautical theme to raise money for the RNLI SOS day. This took place on Friday 27th January.

All staff were invited to wear nautical clothing, with donations to the very worthy RNLI SOS day which raises money to help keep the lifeboats fully operational.

There were also competitions such as cake making – where cakes were baked and sold to staff – and a “guess the sailor” competition.

The team at County Insurance have so far raised £390.90 which is a great effort with further funds to follow for a very worthy cause. This sum can pay for a brand new “state of the art” life jacket and some sea wellies for a volunteer sea member.

County Insurance is an insurance broker , providing both personal insurance (car/van/ home/travel) at www.insurance4your.co.uk and the complete range of business insurance www.countyins.com

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*The BMW/MINI Business Partnership programme is only available to business users only.