



**08.02.08**

The last fortnight has seen some interesting and exciting developments in Coastal West Sussex. Its great to see that regardless of (almost) Black Mondays and Super Tuesdays, we can talk positively on Fridays about opportunities that are starting to become a reality in our area.

As always, please feel free to use this service. If you have a story to tell, wish to profile your company or relay any other news please get in touch.

## Arun's Economic Strategy - Business Consultation Event

This week Arun's Economic & Cultural Development Department held a successful business event to gather views to help shape the economic strategy for the district. Key themes that came from the meeting were: closing the skills gap - particularly for the manufacturing industries, skills for school leavers, suitable premises to allow businesses to expand in the area, more easily available sources of advice, and shared services.

It was great to see that so many local firms, small, medium and large, turned out at the Beachcroft Hotel in Felpham to give their thoughts and ideas. Its this sort of communication and networking that will mean an economic strategy that is in keeping with what our businesses want to see. Watch this space for further developments.

Which links in nicely with another event I attended.....

## Successful Skills for Coastal West Sussex Event

Following two meetings of business leaders held on the West Sussex Coast in Autumn '07, and organised by West Sussex Economic Partnership, the skills of the workforce, now and into the future, was considered a key issue for future success.

To begin investigating how this could be developed further a small breakfast meeting was held on Tuesday, 5th February at University of Chichester. Hosted by Robin Baker, newly appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Chichester and Richard Parker, Principal of Chichester College, the purpose was to engage with local businesses to hear more about the skills issues facing business now and into the future.

After a delicious breakfast, an informal and positive conversation developed about how the skills issues facing businesses can be addressed by local schools, colleges and the university and businesses working together. Some good points were raised, and whilst

both businesses and education establishments were making connections and encouraging beneficial partnerships in some areas, it was clear that more could be done to ensure skills supply met skills demand.

It was a positive event, and one which I hope will be the catalyst for future open discussions to resolve the skills issue we have in Coastal West Sussex.

## Coastal commercial property defying national trends

Last month I was fortunate to be invited to a Sites & Premises meeting, hosted by West Sussex Economic Partnership, at the new Yeoman Gate development at Durrington. It was notable for a number of reasons including the fact that most of the (office) units have now been sold, proving that there is demand for quality office space in CWS, and because the message was one of positivity for commercial property in Coastal West Sussex.

The event was organised by Kylee Charles who manages the Commercial Property Database for WSEP, and the following press release was issued:

Coastal commercial property defying national trends: but businesses warned empty property rates up in April

Return on investment in commercial property was higher in Coastal West Sussex than in most other parts of the UK, business leaders and commercial property agents were told at a seminar organised by the West Sussex Economic Partnership last week. They were also warned that the days of zero rates on business properties would end in April.

The commercial property market on the West Sussex Coast was defying national trends with demand especially for freehold premises still strong. New developments were coming on stream and despite the pressures, banks were still prepared to lend up to 75 per cent of the value of a commercial property at 1.4 per cent over base rate. Businesses on the coast were prepared to pay up to £2.00 per sq foot premium for good modern facilities.

Rod Thomas of Vail Williams told delegates about the changes coming in April to rating on empty properties. Previously exempt, empty warehouses would attract a 100 per cent rate after six months from April while offices would be charged at 100 per cent after three rather than the current six months. He also said that a new Rating List would be prepared for 2010 based on 2008 rents.

WSEP Chief Executive Alistair Smith says: "Although it would be wrong to try to forecast what will happen to commercial property on the Coast against the current volatile financial markets, the fact that demand and investment have been strong underlines the potential of the economy."

"There is a lot going for the coast – it offers an excellent quality of life, economic opportunity and will have an increasing population as housing targets are met. The need to limit outbound commuting by these new households will mean creating business growth and more jobs; a modern commercial property stock is a part of that opportunity," he added.

# Bognor Regis Regeneration

[www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration](http://www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration)

If you live in or around Bognor Regis, it won't have escaped your notice that last week a public consultation was held to gather views of the initial plans for the St Modwen Development at Hothampton & the Regis Centre site. This week sees the plans for the former LEC site come to public consultation in order to gain an understanding of what is wanted by businesses and residents alike.

Over 2000 visitors who saw some exciting and positive plans for how Bognor Regis could develop in the future viewed the St Modwen plans. I hope you took the opportunity to go and have a look.

In respect of both sites, but especially the LEC site, in my opinion it is vitally important that business owners take the opportunity to express their view. It is important in terms of ensuring the proposals have taken on board their requirements and concerns regarding the need for new and high quality premises to allow the sustainable improvement of local business, and create the commercial and social environment in which their businesses operate.

Businesses must make their voices heard too. Arun's requirement was, and still is that the LEC site has to be '**employment dominated**'. The 'residential only' option (of the three proposed) is not one which Arun supports nor has promoted as an option with Sime Darby. T

There needs to be some evidence of demand from local businesses that their very vocal requirement for new premises in the Town is very real.

I believe that companies who are looking to relocate in the Town should contact Sime Darby (or the [Regeneration Team](#)) as soon as possible to promote their potential occupation of the Lec site, to encourage the relevant agents that there is demand for new commercial property on this site.

Hopefully many of you will have taken the time to visit the exhibition of Sime Darby's proposals for the LEC site at the Regis Centre this week. This is your opportunity to prove to the owners that commercial property is what is wanted for this site. The exhibition & consultation is open Wednesday 6th February 10am - 8pm, and Thursday 7th February 10am - 5pm.

You can still view the proposals for the St Modwen proposals and make a comment at [www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration](http://www.arun.gov.uk/bognorregisregeneration)

**Make sure you have your say!**

## Rustington BID survey

For Rustington Trading Estate businesses only.

Thanks to those who did fill in the form, however we are still looking for replies so please fill in and [submit](#) it online!

Remember there are some excellent prizes on offer!!!

## Lancing Business Park BID

The Business Improvement District process is moving from strength to strength at Lancing Business Park. This week saw a dedicated webpage about the BID go live on [www.lancingbusinesspark.co.uk](http://www.lancingbusinesspark.co.uk). From here, readers can find out what the BID is, what it means to a business and when events are happening. In the next two weeks, the Business Plan will be available.

This week saw the Business Park featured in an article ([click here](#)) by UK BIDs on developing Business Park BIDs, which highlighted the good work done by both Private & Public sector partners to get to this stage.

This week saw the second BID Newsletter released to businesses on the Business Park. [Click Here](#) to view.

There will be street briefings (and a free bacon sandwich & hot drink) on the following dates for all businesses located on Lancing Business Park:

For properties located in **Chartwell Road & Spencer Road**, Wed 20th Feb @ 9am, location: Tuk Tuk Restaurant (Manhattan Furniture)

For properties located in **Marlborough Road & Blenheim Road**, Wed 27th Feb @ 9am, location: Tuk Tuk Restaurant (Manhattan Furniture)

For properties located in **Commerce Way & Peter Road**, Wed 5th March @ 9am, location TBA

## Free Seminar

Resource Efficiency Network - One Day Seminar  
Innovation in Metal Finishing and Printed Circuit Manufacturing

This week a notice came through from the [Resource Efficiency KTN](#) about this FREE seminar, which will present results from two current EU-funded projects

IONMET is exploring the use of ionic liquids and deep eutectic solvents as electrolytes in a wide range of metal finishing processes of great importance to the surface finishing and printed circuit manufacturing sectors.

PROSURF provides a range of free support services: a roadmap defining future research strategies, a best practice methodology to get SMEs involved in research and innovation, a partnering platform and more.

It's being hosted by the Birmingham Medical Institute and is on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008 but it is FREE.

For more information on the programme for the day and to download a copy of the registration form, please [click here](#)

Regardless of how useful this event is (or isn't!), the website is pretty good:  
<http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/195733>

## South Bersted Business Park Lunchtime Walk - Health Is Your Business

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, our Community Health Improvement Nurse - Karen Davies is organising some Heart related activities to link in with Valentines Day!

One of these is a lunchtime walk for employees based in South Bersted Business Park Bognor Regis ([click here for more details](#))

The good news is physical activity...

- halves your risk of developing Coronary Heart disease
- reduces the risk of a stroke
- helps lower your blood pressure
- reduces your chance of developing diabetes
- helps you lose weight
- increases energy
- relieves stress
- reduces risk of osteoporosis

### Blood Pressure Checks - Lancing Business Park

On February 14th Karen will be at Tuk Tuk, the restaurant at Manhattan Furniture, from 9.30am until 2pm to do some free blood pressure checks.

High Blood pressure rarely makes people feel ill, however put plainly the higher your blood pressure the shorter your life expectancy! Untreated high blood pressure (BP) increases the risk of having a stroke or a heart attack.

The good news is that there are a number of lifestyle changes you can make to lower your BP. Karen will be on hand to take your blood pressure, and to offer advice on how to change your diet or exercise habits to help you lower your blood pressure!

So why not pop over on your own or with some colleagues to see Karen at Tuk Tuk on the 14th and get your BP checked?

Also there is a competition for the week for a healthy "**Love is.....**" caption - the 1st prize being a pedometer! (Well did you expect chocolates?!)

And finally, have a great weekend!