

Chamber News

January/February 2013



President's Foreword

Crawley voted 7th best place to do business

What makes Crawley so special?

The above was the title of a presentation given by John Fisher, the Director of Local Futures Group at the Crawley Better Business Conference towards the end of 2012.

The study researched 325 local authorities and the economic mix, to find out where was the best place to do business in the UK. Questions included Economic Scale, which was dominated by cities, product activity, where Crawley came 27/325. Knowledge drive, where Crawley came 16th/325. Quite impressive I am sure you will agree. The economic areas were rated between A and E for each category. Crawley received 7A's, 6B's, 4C's and only 1D with a final overall national position of 7th best location to do business in the UK. Doesn't that make you feel proud! (full details of the survey can be found on the Chamber web site, www.crawleychamber.co.uk)

So what should we do about this? Keep it to ourselves or share it? I say we share it and if we want to encourage inward investment into Crawley, then promoting these results is a great springboard.

I therefore ask that you bring these results into your business meetings, into your sales and marketing campaigns and let people know what a great place Crawley is for business. Lets encourage companies to come here and trade here. It will generate business for all of us.

Steve Rham, President - Crawley & Gatwick Chamber of Commerce
steve@s4b-shredding.co.uk

Chamber exec for 2013 elected!

At the AGM that took place at our last breakfast meeting the Chamber Exec were elected to serve for the Chamber interests for the forthcoming 12 months to the end of November 2013.

Those voted in were as follows:

Steve Rham - President (S4B Shredding)

Matt Turner - Vice President (Creative Pod)

Philip Haydon - Treasurer (RPD)

Lorraine Nugent - Portfolio holder for Publicity (Media Word Waves)

Ian Harper - Portfolio holder for Economic issues (HSBC)

Paul Roe - Portfolio holder for Transport (Reeves)

Geoff Williamson - Portfolio holder for Community, Business and Environment (ITUK)

Madeleine Mills - Portfolio holder for Education (Young Enterprise)

Alfredo Menzies - Portfolio holder for Town Centre (Crawley Town Centre Manager)

As you can see from the above, regrettably, Francis Pole who has been a member of the Chamber and played an active role on the exec committee for a number of years has now stepped down from the Exec but will continue to attend our meetings.

We would like to thank Francis for his support over the years.

You may also notice that the Committee now have a Vice President - Matt Turner, MD of Creative Pod who has come on board to aid Steve in running the Chamber over the next 12 months with a view to becoming President in the future.

Matt is a well-known member of the local business community, has lived in Crawley all his life and went to school at Hazelwick. Matt is a successful local entrepreneur in the area with his business based in the heart of Crawley.

Matt is well connected and hopes to bring a flux of new members to the Chamber along with creative ideas to take the Chamber forward.

Eurozone debt crisis: panic over !

After such a topsy-turvy few years the title of this piece might seem like a foolhardy hostage to fortune. But there can be no denying that 2013 starts with the crisis under much firmer control than was the case 12 months ago. Looking back, a considerable amount has been done, both by the ECB and by the politicians.

For its part, the ECB has undertaken two massive long term refinancing operations, doling out around a trillion euros of three-year money to liquidity-starved banks. Then in September, Mario Draghi announced the launch of the Open Market Transactions (OMT) programme as a bond buying backstop for use by the likes of Spain and Italy.

On the political front, the 'Fiscal Compact', which was agreed at the EU summit in December 2011, has taken effect from 1st January for 12 of the 17 Eurozone members. Meanwhile, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) has been established as a permanent rescue facility, with a firepower of €500 billion; and the heads of state have reached agreement on a banking union, to take effect in 2014. Indeed, for all its messiness and complexity the Eurozone has managed to make America's gridlocked politicians look like lumbering sloths.

Above all, over recent months the Eurozone's politicians have finally provided nervous investors with tangible evidence of their commitment to sustaining the single currency with its current membership. Having first put exit risk on the table in the frenetic days during the autumn of 2011 when Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy had demonstrably lost patience with the governments in Greece and Italy, the chances of anybody being kicked out or choosing to leave have greatly reduced. In Greece's case matters have been greatly helped by the recent approval, albeit after a tortuous process, for the disbursement of close to €50 billion of rescue money. Moreover, with Greece having completed a successful buy-back of some of its debt, and its credit rating having been upgraded six notches by Standard and Poors, Greek government bond yields (at around 11% at a ten-year maturity) are no longer in the stratosphere.

Ian C HARPER - HCBC

Do you Support A Second Runway for Gatwick?

Members will recall I suggested we could have a debate on whether the development of Gatwick via a second runway would be beneficial, with a view to voting on the matter in mid-year.

Having investigated further, debates are already being organized by Crawley Borough Council and will attract wider audiences and will draw out all of the main arguments. I would urge members to attend, listen, and make whatever comments they see fit.

The first debate is being organised at the Civic Hall on the evening of Wednesday, 6th February. Please see the following link for details, and how to register to attend the event. I expect environmental issues will be covered, as Gatwick Area Conservation Group have a main panel speaker involved.
http://www.crawley.gov.uk/pw/News_and_Events/PUB185847

The Gatwick Diamond Initiative is sponsoring, a debate in late May on the economic case for a second runway at Gatwick. It will be organised by Chart Lane, a PR company, so that it can be seen as an independent, balanced debate. Details of this will follow in a subsequent newsletter.

After the second event, we will organise a vote of Chamber members, possibly electronically, to capture a larger number than can come to any individual meeting.

This decision is not ours to make, but it will be the single most important decision for the development of Crawley over the next generation, and probably beyond, so we should take an active part in the process.

Hopefully I'll see lots of co-members at both events!

Paul Roe
Reeves - Paul.roe@reeves.co



Pilot prepares the way to target fraud

Crawley accountancy firm and payroll bureau Richard Place Dobson is piloting a scheme that will transform the way PAYE is run.

The Real Time Information (RTI) system becomes compulsory next April and the firm, which runs the payroll for more than 120 clients, is one of a number of bureaux pioneering the system before H M Revenue & Customs introduces the process in the way employers submit their annual tax returns.

The firm has chosen four of its payroll clients to participate in the pilot, which is running between now and next April. The four vary in size from 30 employees to four and all hail from different industry sectors.

"All four employers were more than happy to be part of the pilot as this will mean that they are ahead of the game and ready when the scheme is made mandatory in April 2013," Matthew added.

The biggest shake-up in PAYE since it was introduced over 60 years ago, RTI will mean tighter controls and real-time reporting, stresses Janet Marshall, Payroll Manager at Richard Place Dobson, who is co-ordinating the pilot.

"All records need to be up to date and accurate, including correct full names, National Insurance numbers, dates of birth and number of hours worked during a particular month.

"This has not always been the case, with HMRC seeing many claims with 'A N Other' and records not tying up or names shortened. This will not be allowed in the new system."

She added: "The goalposts do keep moving as we work through the pilot period and we attend regular update meetings with the Payroll Alliance to air our findings and share intelligence to ensure resilience of the system."

The new scheme will raise the profile of employers with HMRC each month, Matthew Tyson added, making it easier for them to target offending employees who might not have been declaring everything in the past, and to identify benefit cheats.

Employers will have to focus far more on internal disciplines to ensure they provide accurate and more detailed information about their employees. "RTI may also create a further cashflow burden to some employers as there will be a pressure to pay PAYE when it is due rather than allow an arrears to build up which is very easy at the moment," Matthew Tyson cautioned.

Richard Place Dobson is pleased to be at the forefront of RTI to ensure a smooth process for their clients when the scheme becomes law next April and can answer any questions and provide answers to ensure a quality and seamless transition for their clients and those using the payroll bureau at Richard Place Dobson www.placedobson.co.uk.



Richard Review into future of apprenticeships published

Doug Richard, entrepreneur, educator and founder of School for Startups, was asked by the Education Secretary Michael Gove and the Business Secretary Vince Cable to consider the future of apprenticeships in England, and to recommend how they can meet the needs of the changing economy.

Mr. Richard was also asked to advise on how to ensure that every apprenticeship delivers high-quality training and the qualifications and skills that learners need, maximising every pound spent on them by the Government. He sought out a wide-range of views from employers of all sizes, academics, experts, apprentices, colleges and training providers.

His review recognises the good provision that exists today, with many committed employers delivering valuable opportunities for their apprentices. However, Mr. Richard emphasises the need for greater ambition if all apprenticeships are to meet the standards of the best.

Mr. Richard's review sets out a comprehensive vision for the future of apprenticeships. Key themes and recommendations include:

• Redefining apprenticeships

Apprenticeships should be targeted only at those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained and substantial training.

• Focusing with greater rigor on the outcome

What the apprentice can do when they complete their training and freeing up the process by which they get there. Trusted, independent assessment is key.

• Recognised industry standards

Employers and other organisations with relevant industry expertise should be invited to design and develop new apprenticeship qualifications for their sectors.

• All apprentices should reach a good level in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship.

• Government funding must create the right incentives

The purchasing power for investing in apprenticeship training should lie with the employer.

• Far greater diversity and innovation in training

Employers and government should take on a more active role in safeguarding quality.

Commenting on the launch of his review, Doug Richard said: "No matter who I speak with, everyone agrees that apprenticeships are a good thing – but only when they are 'true' apprenticeships. With the myriad of learning experiences which are currently labeled as apprenticeships, we risk losing sight of the core features of what makes apprenticeships work so my conclusion is that we need to look again at what it means to be an apprentice and what it means to offer an apprenticeship as an employer.

The Government welcomes the wide-ranging review and recommendations it sets out.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said:

"I welcome Doug Richard's review which echoes the Government's current thinking on putting employers in the driving seat of our apprenticeship programme. This will be vital to ensure the skills of our workforce fit with employer needs. His recommendations will help us to build on the current successes of our apprenticeships programme and tailor a programme which is sustainable, high-quality and meets the changing needs of our economy in the decades to come."

The Government will now consider Mr. Richard's recommendations and will issue a full response later this year. The full report can be viewed at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/apprenticeships/richard-review>

Madeleine Mills
Portfolio holder for Education & Workplace Skills

HAZELWICK AVENUE UNDERPASS TO CLOSE FOR ESSENTIAL WORKS



Starting in February 2013 the underpass at Hazelwick Avenue will be closed for up to 16 weeks to allow essential works to take place by West Sussex County Councils contractor Balfour Beatty Living Places.

This will unfortunately result in potential delays to journey times around this area and alternative routes should be sought. The flyover structure, which consists of two bridges that straddle the Hazelwick roundabout, is 40 years old and its condition is deteriorating.

Work needs to be done to install new bearings, add a waterproof membrane, expansion joints and to resurface the road. This will ensure that this essential structure is available to businesses and the community for years to come. For safety reasons, the flyover will be closed to traffic throughout the duration of the work.

West Sussex Broadband Steering Group

A meeting took place in Horsham on Fri 11th of January to check that everything was in order to complete the Bid for faster broadband in West Sussex.

The Bid process is well in hand but delayed by several months due to EU intervention. This has now been resolved and the bids can progress.

This may result in the West Sussex Bid not being completed by the Government's 2015 deadline but in all other aspects it should be ok.

Details cannot be given due to the Confidentiality of the bid.

Part 1 of the bid was completed in December 2012 and it is hoped that part 2 will be completed mid April 2013 I am led to believe that the West Sussex Bid is 11th in the queue so delays in any of the other 10 areas may affect us.

As soon as more information is made available I will update you all.
Geoff Williamson - Geoff@ituk.biz

Chestnut Tree House 10th Birthday BUSINESS AWARDS

Thursday 14 March 2013

South Lodge Hotel, Horsham
6pm Drinks Reception, Dinner & Awards Ceremony

Hosted by Ambrose Hartcourt,
Broadcaster & Patron of Chestnut Tree House



Chestnut Tree House
Children's Hospice Care

Dates for your diary



Next Chamber meeting

21st February – Bowling night against East Grinstead Business Association

27th February – Members Breakfast 8am till 10am – Crowne Plaza

21st March – Easistore event – more details to follow shortly

27th March – Members Breakfast 8am till 10am – Premier Inn

24th April – Members Breakfast 8am till 10am – Ramada Plaza

Please contact jose@crawleychamber.co.uk to book and/or for more details on any of the above or visit the chamber website www.crawleychamber.co.uk and pay online.

Chamber executive portfolio holders:

Steve Rham - President steve@s4b-shredding.co.uk

Matt Turner - Vice President matt@creativepod.net

Lorraine Nugent - Publicity lorraine@mediawordwaves.com

Ian Harper - Economic issues ianharper@hsbc.com

Madeleine Mills - Education madeleine.mills@young-enterprise.org.uk

Paul Roe - Transport - Gatwick paul.roe@reeves.co

Philip Hayden - Treasurer philip@placedobson.co.uk

Francis Pole - Transport francis.pole@virgin.net

Geoff Williamson - Community, Business and Environment geoff@ituk.biz

Mendes, Alfredo - Town Centre - alfredo.mendes@crawley.gov.uk

Publicity



Lorraine Nugent of Media Word Waves and editor of the Chamber monthly newsletter

If you, as a member, have news that you would like to share with other members of the Chamber in the next newsletter please let me know. If you require more information with regards to the publicity of the Chamber please speak to Lorraine or email Lorraine@mediawordwaves.com

Welcome to Bloc Hotels

bloc™ has created a contemporary formula for hospitality with particular emphasis on design, technology and price. The hotels are built to the highest standard; the compact rooms come with the highest specification finishes; from the king-sized beds, to the monsoon drench showers, the most advanced Samsung technology and free Wi-Fi.

bloc™'s second property will open in 2013 inside Gatwick Airport and is set to revolutionise airport accommodation. The multi-million pound project will see the redevelopment of Gatwick's former office building Norfolk House into an intelligently engineered 244 room hotel, representing a new standard in stylish and affordable accommodation. Specially created 'sleep zones' with the highest specification sound proofing will ensure a restful stay for even the most sleep-deprived guests and many rooms will boast runway views. Rates at the bloc™ Gatwick will start from £60 per night.

bloc™ Birmingham opened in April 2011, in the vibrant cultural hub that is the Jewellery Quarter. With 73 rooms spread across 4 floors and surrounded by a variety of restaurants, shops and clubs that bloc™ has gathered in their guide "around the bloc" which also includes some special offers for guests.

For more information visit:
www.blochotels.com
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