



Maldon District Business News

Autumn/Winter 2007

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"Voice Yours Views" - What was said!

On 11th September at the Minerva Centre, Mundon, business club members from around the district met Maldon District Council's Economic Development Team to discuss ways of improving the Maldon District Business Club, network over breakfast and receive free blood pressure checks from the "Creating Excellence" team.

The topic of discussion was the format of the business club and how it can be improved to attract new members. The ideas put forward included:

The Structure of the Business Club:

We Proposed: A Restructure of the club into a Business Forum, in order for businesses to meet & discuss issues facing their specific sector. Business will be categorised into the following sectors: **Retail, Leisure & Tourism, Hi-Tech & Manufacturing, Professional Services and Property & Transport.** This will allow the business forum to take a larger role in local debates on those issues facing businesses in the district.

You told us: This is a good idea, however networking with businesses across the different sectors is important to business club members. As such the networking events should not be lost in these changes.



Networking Meetings:

You told us: You want monthly networking meetings.

What we are going to do: We are arranging events to be held on the **second**

Tuesday of each month usually in the training room at Maldon District Council offices with presentations from club members. A nominal charge may be made for breakfast of £5.00 and breakfast must be pre-booked the Tuesday before the meeting, so that catering can be arranged.

As well as the monthly events we will be organising two large seminars on local, regional and national issues, the dates for these events will be **Tuesday 15 April & Tuesday 14 October 2008.** We hope that you will be able to join us at one or both of our events.



Where to go next:

Thank you to all Business Club members for taking the time to talk to the Economic Development Team about the club on the 11 September. After taking on board all comments and putting forward our ideas we will be unveiling the new club at its AGM on Tuesday 29 January 2008 at 5.30pm at the Council Offices. All members are invited to attend. The event will further outline the programme of events for the year including networking events, forum sector meetings and the forum steering group.

An invitation and reminder notice will be sent out to all members at the beginning of January 2008.

If you were unable to attend on September the 11, but would like to share your views on these issues, please contact the Economic Development Team on 01621 875846 or email busdev@maldon.gov.uk

Community News, Events and Sponsorship Opportunities

Can your business help support the Maldon Victorian Evenings?

Maldon has a number of events, which the locals enjoy, and which attract many visitors. One of these is the Victorian Shopping Evenings, now in their 23rd year. Many of the local shops and businesses benefit from longer trading hours, and the large number of people that attend. Money is needed to cover the costs of the varied entertainment programme, and a range of equipment and services that are necessary for such an event, and hopefully a contribution to a nominated local charity. To this end, the organisers would greatly appreciate donations from not only all High Street businesses, but also from the many other local businesses. Donations payable to :
Maldon District Chamber of Commerce Victorian Evenings A/c - and sent to :

Maldon District Chamber of Commerce,
PO Box 2485, Maldon, Essex, CM9 5SZ

Your Invited to S.W.A.N.S Annual Charity Dinner

S.W.A.N.S (Sometimes We All Need Support) would like to invite Business Club members to their annual charity dinner at Three Rivers Golf and Country Club on Saturday 24 November.

This black tie event consists of a three course dinner, dancing and a casino, with the proceeds going to support the local work of S.W.A.N.S. Tickets cost £40 per person or £320 for a table of 8. Ticket price includes reception drinks, dinner followed by coffee and mints, a half bottle of wine per person and £10 of casino chips per person.

If you would like to book tickets for this event, please contact Julia Dowling on 01621 841491 or email Julia@swans.org.uk

Saint FM launches new full-time service in December

Saint FM is due to go on air on 1st December, 2007 with the voices, music, news and views of the people of the Maldon District. The new station has a licence to broadcast 24/7 over the following five years.

Flagship programmes include breakfast and drive-time magazines, featuring music and chat, plus local news, sports, weather and traffic.

Saint FM will bring the region its very own radio soap, drama, phone-ins, chat shows, quizzes and competitions. There will be music performed by local, regional and international musicians. And there'll be plenty of opportunity for people to question decision-makers about local policy and get across their point of view.

AUDIENCE PROFILE

Some 60,000 people live in the Maldon District:
86% own their own cars
80% of adults own their own home
There is 2% unemployment
72 % are aged 16-74, with children accounting for 21%
and senior citizens at 7%

Saint FM will also be broadcasting to friends and relatives around the world via the internet.

WHY PEOPLE LISTEN TO SAINT FM?

Saint FM's previous month-long broadcasts were highly popular precisely because it was radio made by ordinary people FOR ordinary people. In a MySpace world, Saint FM offers a real chance to broadcast individual personality - and that's a trend that's becoming ever more popular.

Saint FM is different to other radio because it's so original and diverse. You'll hear programmes presented by neighbours, news written, recorded and presented by young people, music played by friends, and a soap written and performed by local folk. It makes for fascinating and compulsive listening.

Rooted in the community, Saint FM is a unique and compelling window on local life; the schools, the sports clubs, the businesses, the history, the waterfronts, the village greens... It's a refreshing change from formula radio.



chat & fun
local news & sports
weather & traffic events & what's on
your point of view
all about where you live
history & heritage
a growing network of regional studios
media training
flood & other emergency announcements

Saint FM Studio: 01621 785689

St Peter's High School www.saintfm.org.uk
Burnham-on-Crouch Essex, CM0 8QB saintfm@btopenworld.com

Bradwell Reactor Site:

Supporting the rural economy

Bradwell Reactor Site has become involved in Maldon District Council's drive to create better links between rural farmers and the local authorities. Barny Richardson sits within the council's Economic Development Team as the Rural Business Advisor, supporting the farming and rural business community by helping them with planning, business development, pre-planning application meetings, relocation of businesses, liaison with planning officers and the reuse of farm buildings.

Bradwell Site has provided £10,000 of funding to the council which ensured that Barny could continue his work in the rural community. As well as the monetary involvement, the Site has also had input into Barny's targets and objectives for the year, such as how many businesses should be assisted and the number of buildings converted. The site was able to fund the project to ensure its continued success after learning it was under threat following the end of its initial funding from a regeneration agency. Barny said, "The partnership between Maldon District Council and Bradwell will ensure the continuation of the role and help to produce even more positive results for the rural economy and heritage in the Maldon district".

The position is charged with advising farmers and rural businesses in the district and potential businesses moving to the district on issues regarding the growth of their businesses – with a particular emphasis on guiding businesses through the planning processes. The advisor has ready access to the planning department at MDC, its officers and information and can help both sides in any planning debate to realise the merits of their arguments and achieve a satisfactory conclusion for both parties.



Oly Serrano, Site Director at Bradwell said "We were delighted to have the opportunity to build our relationship with Maldon District Council and ensure that the good work Barny has been doing continues. We've seen the positive results of his work and are confident that he will be able to support and develop more local businesses this year. Bradwell Site is committed to supporting and developing local businesses to help sustain and grow the local economy."

For more information contact Barny Richardson on 01621 875 783 or email barnabas.richardson@maldon.gov.uk

Company Profile: Portabrandz Ltd

Company name: PortaBrands Ltd

Location: The Gallery, Minerva Centre, Mundon

Number of employees: 6

Year Established: March 2005

History: PortaBrands was founded by Ian Bates (Inventor and CEO) and Richard Davies (Market & Sales Director), two well respected professionals with over 40 years combined experience in strategic management, manufacturing, sales, marketing, product development and people management.

What does your company do? PortaBrands Ltd invent and develop new ethical, renewable and sustainable packaging products, which are reusable, recyclable, biodegradable and, where possible, compostable.

The company thinks about where and how best to manufacture the product to optimise supply and think about the entire supply chain to reach the best solution for packing, distribution, merchandising, ease of use, re-use and disposability.

We are continually developing new carrier products, which help busy people eat and drink safely and comfortably on the move. The design, from every aspect, is at the forefront of our thinking when we develop a new product.

Awards/Successes:

Three Starpack packaging design innovation awards, 2006.

Costa Coffee – sole supplier of drink carriers.

PortaChilla™ - paper ice-bucket, which is safe and disposable, used at Wimbledon, Newmarket, Ascot and Epsom race-courses and Twickenham.

Supply most of the major disposable distributors; including Bunzl, King UK, Euro Packaging, WK Thomas and Espresso Warehouse

Current/Future Projects:

Launch of 'GoodBio' bags to replace plastic bags.

Other Interests: Corporate member of Essex Wildlife Trust

Contact Details: For more information and downloads, go to www.portabrandz.com

Do you want your company to be profiled in the Newsletter? Contact the Economic Development Team for more information.



Changes to the rate liability of empty and partly occupied properties to take effect from 1 April 2008

The Government has reformed empty property relief in order to provide a strong incentive to bring empty property back into use. The reforms to empty property relief have consequential impacts for the rates liability for empty and partly occupied property and Maldon District Council is required by Central Government to implement these changes.

As of **1 April 2008**, most property that has been empty for more than three months - or, in the case of industrial property, for more than six months - will no longer receive relief from rates.

After the initial three or six month rate-free period expires, empty property will be liable for 100% of the basic occupied business rate, unless it:

1. qualifies for the new zero rate provided by the Rating (Empty Properties) Act 2007.

From 1 April 2008 the rates liability of empty property that is held by a charity and appears likely to be next used for charitable purposes, or that is held by a community amateur sports club and appears unlikely to be next used for the purposes of the club, will be reduced from 10% of the basic occupied rate to zero.

2. qualifies for an exemption from rates under the NNDR (Unoccupied Property) Regulations.

While the current permanent exemption for industrial property will be reduced to six months, the Government proposes to preserve the majority of the other existing exemptions unchanged. However, the Government is consulting on possible reforms to the exemption for empty property that is listed or subject to a building preservation notice; and on the possibility of extending the exemption from rates for empty property held by companies in liquidation to that held by companies in administration.

If your property is not capable of beneficial occupation - for instance, if it is in poor condition and cannot be economically repaired - your valuation officer may judge that it should be taken out of the rating list altogether. However, please be aware that if the state of your property is damaged for the purposes of avoiding rates, under new anti-avoidance legislation introduced by the Government your valuation officer will be required to disregard the change in the property's state when assessing its rateable value. So for instance, if the roof is removed from an empty property for the purposes of avoiding rates, it may be valued as if the roof had not been removed.

Further information about the changes can be found on the Valuation Office website

http://www.voa.gov.uk/business_rates/empty_property_rates_changes.htm

or on Maldon District Council Website

<http://www.maldon.gov.uk/LivingHere/CTBenBR/BusinessRates/Empty+Rate+Changes.htm>

*If you have any queries, please contact
customer services team on 01621 854477*

Register NOW to receive your Business Rates or Council Tax bill by email!



As part of our improved customer service, you can now receive your bills by e-mail.

The bill will be sent to your chosen email address with the statutory information leaflets also included as attachments. By signing up to this service you will not only be ensuring that you receive your bill promptly, you will also be helping to keep the Council Tax as low as possible by reducing printing, publication and postage costs.

If you are interested in receiving your future bills by this method please register now by logging on to <http://www.maldon.gov.uk/LivingHere/CTBenBR/ebilling.htm> and click on the link for e-billing registration. Alternatively, simply send an email with your name, address and account number to ebilling@maldon.gov.uk confirming you wish to switch to this service.

If you have any queries please contact our Customer Services Team on 01621 854477

Tell the Council what services are important to you!

Council Budget Position: The Council is in the process of setting its budget for the 2008/09 next financial year and once again the position is particularly tight.



Particular pressures this year are resulting from significantly increased costs arising from the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 which comes into effect from April 2008. The new concession arising from this will guarantee free off-peak bus travel anywhere in England for people aged 60 and over. The Council has seen significant increased demand for passes since they became free in April 2006, the costs of which have outstripped the additional government funding provided to fund this.

The Government has recently announced its Comprehensive Spending Review which provides an early indication that government grant funding may be increased by an amount above the rate of inflation, which will help to meet some of the additional costs. This grant pays for approximately 34% of the Council's expenditure with the balance being met from Council tax, fees and charges and investment interest.

The Council will continue to need to pay close attention to its budget position and ensure that resources are invested wisely and may need to make some difficult decisions to cut expenditure in some areas.

Your views: The Council would like to hear your views on the services that it should give priority to when setting its 2008/09 budget.

A questionnaire has been drawn up to provide you with the opportunity to express your views. This will be available on the Council's web site from mid November at the following address www.maldon.gov.uk; or if you would like to respond in writing please phone us on **01621 875764** and we will send you a blank questionnaire and background information.

How can Maldon District Council's Planning Department help you?

When you need to expand and/or relocate who do you approach? Make the Planning Department one of your first ports of call!

- We want to support local businesses and offer an advice service in consultation with the Economic Development Team so you can bounce ideas off us to help you find a way forward
- We are here to assist you – come and see us to talk through your plans and we will always endeavour to give you clear advice on the planning issues involved, explain the planning process and work with you to try and facilitate your needs

Contact either Peter Le Grys (*Maldon, Heybridge and north of the District*) or Debi Bunkell (*Burnham and the Dengie*) to discuss your ideas further on 01621 854477.



Who's Who in the Development Control Team

To speak to any of DC officers in your area call 01621 854477

Maldon, North and West Area

PETER LE GRYS
DC Team Leader

CHRIS PURVIS
Senior DC Officer

KATE STEVENS
DC Officer

YEE CHEUNG
DC Officer

Burnham & Dengie Area

DEBI BUNKELL
DC Team Leader

HILARY BALDWIN
Technical Planner

DAVID WALLIS
DC Officer

JULIA NEWMAN
Technical Planner

Are you aware of the impact of domestic violence on your employees?

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - THE FACTS

Although domestic violence is chronically under reported, research estimates that it:

- accounts for 16% of all violent crime
- has more repeat victims than any other crime (on average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police)
- costs in excess of £23bn a year
- claims the lives of two women each week and 30 men per year
- is the largest cause of morbidity worldwide in women aged 19-44, greater than war, cancer or motor vehicle accidents
- will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime

What is meant by 'domestic violence' (DV)?

Domestic violence is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality

How can I help my employees?

By just increasing the awareness of DV, you can make a big difference in somebody's life.

One of the steps is recognising symptoms of an employee and knowing how to act on it.

The other step is to applying the correct policy and procedure in the work place, this will encourage employees to make the initial step and make the process of dealing with the issues easier.

How can the partnership help my company?



Maldon District Community Partnership is currently offering all businesses in the Maldon District an opportunity to discuss this further and to provide all business with information and guidance on Domestic Violence.

You may also want advice on your policies or need information which you can provide for employees surrounding drugs and alcohol.

If you are interested in taking up this offer, please call **Julia Mackenzie on 01621 875814.**

Free Business Information from Essex Library Services

Did you know you can help yourself to a host of free business information via your local Essex library? We subscribe to a number of electronic business resources ranging from company information and market research to legislation and British Standards.

If you are looking for market research, we can offer **Keynote Market Research** which provides access to over 380 up-to-date market research reports covering 27 UK market sectors. We subscribe to **Marketline Business Information Centre**, giving access to 2500 market reports at global, regional and country level. There are company profiles for 10,000 of the world's major companies and 2000 SWOT analyses.



For information on competitors, suppliers, or any other company you are interested in, try **Hoovers Company Information from Dun & Bradstreet**. You can search for information on 2.2 million UK companies, access 830,000 in depth reports plus catch up on key business news. **Kompass** is excellent for finding suppliers of products or services worldwide; it provides data on more than 1.85 million companies in over 64 countries.

Knotty legal problems may be helped by consulting **Lexis Nexis** which combines the full and up to date text of UK case law, acts of Parliament and statutory instruments.

In our four main libraries (*Chelmsford, Basildon, Colchester and Harlow*) you can access **Cobra – Complete Business Reference Adviser**. Invaluable for the start-up or established business, Cobra gives you access to hundreds of business opportunity profiles and business information fact-sheets. There are also detailed market synopses, local area profiles, an events and exhibitions diary and further sources of UK business information and support.

Of course, if you don't have time you can always contact the Business Information Service direct. We offer a wide range of resources to help those doing business or thinking of doing business in Essex. Please contact us on 01245 492535 or email: business.information@essexcc.gov.uk

RAISING THE AGE OF SALE KNIVES AND CERTAIN ARTICLES WITH A BLADE OR POINT



CHECKLIST FOR EMPLOYERS

From **Monday, October 1st 2007** the law for selling knives and certain articles with a blade or point has changed. From now on, it is illegal to sell these items to anyone **under the age of 18** (an increase from 16). The ban includes any knife, knife blade, razor blade or axe and includes any other article which has a blade or which is sharply pointed and which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person.

There are a number of things you can do to ensure you and your staff are ready when the change comes into force:

- Clearly display the correct signage on your shop counter. This should deter under-aged customers from attempting to buy in the first place and will help in reminding them that you and your staff are simply following the law.
- Tell your staff about the change in the law and train them to always ask for proof of age if they are in any doubt about a customer's age. Make sure your staff understand that they could be personally liable if they sell to people under 18 years old.
- Keep a record of the training and ask the member of staff to sign to say that they have understood it. This should then be kept on file for reference.
- Set up a refusals register to record when you or any member of staff have refused to sell to a young person. This should log the date and time of any incident, the product being purchased, reason for refusal, and a brief description of the customer. This should be available for all staff to refer to.
- We don't anticipate that this change in the law will result in a significant increase in the number of incidents where customers become aggressive when refused sale. However, there may be some 16 and 17 year olds who are unhappy about being refused after October 1st. Staff should be made aware that if any serious incident of abuse occurs, it should be reported to the police.
- You should also be prepared to support and be sensitive to staff if they do encounter abusive or threatening behaviour.
- Consider ways in which you can share intelligence about troublesome individuals with other businesses in the area.
- If you employ under-18s in your business, it is not illegal for them to sell knives and certain articles with a blade or point, provided of course that the customer is not under-age. However, they may find it difficult to refuse to sell to their own age group, so leaving them unsupervised is not recommended.

- If you possess an EPOS system, it may be possible to use it to remind staff of the details of the change and what to do to be compliant, via a prompt.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

From **Monday, October 1st 2007** the law for selling knives and certain articles with a blade or point will change. From then on, it will be illegal to sell these items to anyone **under the age of 18** (an increase from 16). The ban includes any knife, knife blade, razor blade or axe and includes any other article which has a blade or which is sharply pointed and which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person.

If you are in any doubt about a person's age, always ask for proof of age. Valid proof of age documents include passports, photo driving licences, or accredited proof of age cards such as a Citizencard, Portman 'Prove It' card or Validate card. On all proof of age cards, look for the 'PASS' hologram logo.

If you are still in doubt, the sale should not be allowed to take place. **Remember, you could be personally liable if you do sell to someone under the legal age.**

With any sale you refuse because a customer is under-age, or does not have valid proof of age, make sure you log the details on the refusals register that your employer will have set up.

There are some 16 and 17 year olds who will be unhappy about the change coming in on October 1st. In order to avoid potential conflict with customers when refusing a sale:

- Be tactful and polite. Refusal can be embarrassing. Apologise and don't antagonise them or get annoyed yourself.
- Remain calm and don't be tempted to raise your voice, even if they do. If they get angry, stay professional and stand your ground.
- Explain that it is against the law for you to sell knives and certain articles with a blade or point to them - it's nothing personal.
- Always keep the counter between you and the customer.
- In a situation where a customer becomes violent and you are in need of emergency assistance, you should call the police.
- Ensure that you have somewhere to escape to in the case of a serious incident.
- Report any incident to the police.

If you are unsure about any of the above, speak to your employer/manager.

Heybridge Swifts F.C Sponsorship Opportunities

Heybridge Swifts Football Club are the area's highest ranking football club with a proud history and 3 appearances in the FA Cup first round proper to their name. Playing in the Ryman Premier Division, the club seeks sponsors at all levels from match day sponsors (from £100), programme adverts, ground perimeter boards and stand sponsorship to first team shirt sponsors (£10,000). The club are willing to work with prospective sponsors to find a package to suit their needs. Swifts also have a thriving youth section and a fulltime community department working with local schools and junior clubs.



For further information please e-mail
info@heybridgeswifts.com
or call Tony on 07931 330756.

FORTHCOMING BUSINESS CLUB EVENT

Protecting Your Business during Christmas and New Years Closures

Is your business closing for an extended period over Christmas and New Year? Do you want advice on protecting your business while you are away? If yes... this is the event for you!

With presentations from
Essex Police & the Fire Service

This event will provide local businesses with practical advice on how to keep your business secure and give you piece of mind during the festive season.

Date: 11 December 2007

Time: 7.30am-9.00am

Venue: The Training Room, Maldon District Council Offices

Cost: Business Club Members FREE
Additional Guests £5.00

To book please return the enclosed application form by fax or email by Friday 7th December

Useful Contacts:

Adult Education College (Maldon)

Tel: 01621 853337

Web: www.essexcc.gov.uk/adultlearning

Burnham-on-Crouch Visitors and Community Information Centre

Tel: 01621 786376

Email: comm_info@btconnect.com

Business Link East:

Tel: 0845 7171615

Web: www.businesslink.gov.uk/east

East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

Tel: 01223 713900

Web: www.eeda.org.uk

East of England Tourist Board

Tel: 01284 706657

Web: www.eet.org.uk

Essex Chamber of Commerce:

Tel: 01206 765277

Web: www.essexchambers.co.uk

Essex Development & Regeneration Agency (ExDRA)

Tel: 01245 702400

Web: www.exdra.co.uk

Job Centre Plus

Tel: 01245 545000

Web: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Maldon Tourist Information Centre

Tel: 01621 856503

Web: www.maldon.gov.uk

Mid Essex Enterprise Agency

Tel: 01245 496712

Web: www.midessexenterpriseagency.co.uk

Contact Us

Economic Development Team
Maldon District Council
Princes Road
Maldon
Essex
CM9 5DL

Jenny: 01621 875846

Nathan: 01621 875822

Fax: 01621 852575

Email: bus.dev@maldon.gov.uk

Website: www.maldon.gov.uk

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