

Chevening Interchange

As you may be aware, the Chamber is represented on the Sevenoaks Conservation Council. Last year there was discussion and correspondence regarding the M25 Junction 5 Chevening Interchange. As a result a reply was received from the Office of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, David Jamieson, who was replying also on behalf of Alistair Darling.

The letter referred to a study of the Orbit Multi-Modal commissioned by the Government Office for the South East to examine existing & future problems for orbital travel around London & produced a sustainable management strategy for the M25. The study recommended further investigation into the feasibility of providing for additional movements at Junction 5 (with M26 at Sevenoaks).

Mr Jamieson confirms "*The Dept of Transport have recently announced a scheme*

to widen to dual four lanes the majority of the remaining dual three lane sections of the M25. This included the section from Junction 5 to Junction 7. We have also asked the Highways Agency to work on developing options for adding the missing east facing slip roads at Junction 5 to connect the A21 with the M26. It is hoped that this scheme can be developed in a suitable time frame to enable work to be carried out at the same time as Junction 5-7 widening. The programme has yet to be finalised, but it is likely that local consultation will be undertaken in 2005 & will be subject to successful completion of the necessary planning & statutory procedures."

The Conservation Council hopes that the momentum now begun can be maintained and we are grateful to Michael Fallon M.P. who has given assistance and support.

We are still awaiting a scheme for Blighs 2!

Council Tax

Many of us are waiting to see how much the Council Tax bill will increase this year. If we are to believe what we read, an average increase of 3.5% is expected across Kent compared with 5.2% last year. This means about £30 for Band D homes pushing bills from £858 to £888. It seems the Councils' buzz words are lower bills, penalising hard-pressed residents less and greater efficiency.

However with all the add-ons, it will be interesting to see at the end of the day how much we will be paying in the Sevenoaks area come April.

I did read one article that said the KCC budget included an item "*maintaining and repairing Kent's roads*" and this will account for £25million – lets hope some of this comes our way!!

Chance to win £1000 to stop the jobs

People in Sevenoaks who have helped improve their community during the last year could win £1000, towards tackling anti-social behaviour with the Home Office's "Taking a Stand" awards aim, to encourage people to stand up for their neighbourhoods.

A panel will select 100 winners to receive the money and training to help them support their community.

Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership is urging residents to enter. Cllr Keith Loney(Con), cabinet member for Community safety at Sevenoaks District Council, said "*Over the last 12 months, many residents have taken a stand against anti-social behaviour in the district by being willing to make witness statements, reporting vital information to the council and helping to remove graffiti or rubbish*".

For further information about the award schemes, e-mail philip.aldis@sevenoaks.gov.uk or telephone 01732 227134

Simplify tax system plea

SMEs need a simple, certain and fair tax system, the small business community recently told leading MPs. Key Government figures including Paymaster General Dawn Primarolo attended the All Party Parliamentary Small Business Group (APPSBG) briefing where academics and experts, including Neil Hamper from the FSB, voiced their concerns on taxation.

Among the issues raised were the thousands of small businesses that had changed their

legal status from sole trader to limited company. Many did this in order to benefit from a reduced rate of tax rather than, as the Government had envisaged, as a step to growth. The situation, which the Government had tried to resolve by removing this loophole, was put forward as an example of an ever-changing taxation system that needs an injection of consistency.

For more information on the APPSBG log on to www.smallbusinessgroup.org.uk

New parking arrangement for Sevenoaks town

New on-street parking charges, intended to improve the turnover of town-centre parking spaces, have now come into effect.

The new charges will apply to sections of the High Street, London Road and South Park.

The decision to introduce the charges was made by the Council's Cabinet last year as part of its annual parking review. Following the Cabinet's decision, local people were consulted on the proposed charges, and as a result of their comments, the proposals were amended to include a new charge for half-an-hour and to end charging at 6.30pm.

The new charges will be 10p for up to 30 minutes parking, 30p for one hour and 60p for two hours. Drivers will need to buy a ticket

from the ticket machines in the same way as in the town car parks. New ticket machines and signs have been installed and the new charges take effect from Monday 31 January 2005.

A similar scheme was implemented in Westerham two years ago, which SDC say has proved to be successful at improving the use of on-street parking facilities.

We consult on these matters with SDC so please let us have your views and feedback on how successful you feel these parking arrangements are working.

For further information please contact Daniel Whitmarsh at SDC on 01732 227414 or e-mail daniel.whitmarsh@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Diary

Chamber lunch 9th February at the Royal Oak, High Street, Sevenoaks.

NEXT LUNCH

Wednesday 20th April, 2004. Make a note in your diary.

Bring a colleague to the next networking event

New Outlet

I noticed that “*The Officers Club*” outlet in the High Street, after many, many sales, did actually close down so I was interested to see what other retailer would grab the opportunity of opening in its place.

I watched work commence and caught the eye of one of the shopfitters and asked what was happening as I hadn't seen anything on the SDC planning list which is received regularly at the Chamber office. “Another coffee bar was the reply”.

I was surprised as no change of use to my knowledge had been applied for or granted, so I contacted SDC to make enquiries. Lo and behold SDC knew nothing about it so an officer was sent to the premises to halt work.

A concerned Chamber member contacted me to enquire what was happening and I again phoned SDC to find they had just received that day an application for a new shopfront but nothing on the change of use – the cafe didn't think it was required as they had opened in other towns and it hadn't been necessary.

Anyway, as we all can see we have another new coffee shop in the town. Whilst it is good the premises are occupied, a number of retailers are concerned at losing another retail outlet to a cafe/restaurant outlet. This is happening across the country, not just in Sevenoaks so it is as important as ever for our retailers to offer good personal customer service.

We are at the present time trying to visit as many retailers as possible for some feedback – is there anything the Chamber can do for you? Are there any problems we can help you with? We are also asking about the Christmas late night shopping whilst it is still fresh in your minds. Is Friday evening the best time or would Sunday be an idea with lights switch-on around 5.30pm. PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR RESPONSE, IF YOU DON'T TELL US WE CAN'T GUESS YOUR THOUGHTS. Phone the office 455188 or please think about it and tell us when we call.

Contact details

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Committee Members 2004/5

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Members Slot ARK TRADING

Situated at 5 & 7 London Road, Riverhead, Sevenoaks TN13 2BH Telephone 01732 742569 Arktrading@aol.com www.arktrading.com
Ark trading was formed in 1992 by Bob Smart with the aim of selling a complete promotional clothing package to both industrial and the leisure sectors of the market place. Bob having left his position as field sales manager with “Audioline” in the consumer electronics business took up the challenge of targeting a totally new market place. 13 years later Ark trading employs the latest technology with twelve head computer controlled embroidery machines and CAD full colour plotters to supply embroider or print garments to many and varied outlets – anyone from large industrial users to pubs, clubs and leisure centres.

With corporate identity becoming essential for the promotion of both the business sector of the market to the smallest pub darts team, Ark Trading offer a logo design service in order that you may obtain the best possible promotional image.

They also supply a range of promotional printed regalia including pens, coffee mugs, mousemats, umbrellas, golf accessories etc.

Ark Trading also manufactures bespoke clothing and has recently launched a range of nurse's tunics in a new unique fabric, which is resistant to carrying the MRSA virus. These tunics have been listed for appraisal by the new NHS rapid review board.

Bob Smart is pleased to deal with your Enquiries – give him a call.

About the Chamber

Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce founded in 1910 “...to promote and assist businesses to benefit within the community and for the community”.

Member companies range from small to medium entrepreneurial enterprises, through to the large national and international organisations, national banks and multiple retail stores.

This broadband of expertise and our expanding database enables the Chamber to provide a range of information and specialised backup services on offer from our membership.

Our are companies and individual business people who consider that membership is essential in promoting their business profile, both locally, nationally and, now, on the web-site.

The Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce is particularly concerned in providing a strong networking system within the area and County.

Membership of the Chamber offers the

Welcome to New Members

Ditto Office Services Ltd at 46 London Road, Sevenoaks Tel: 456944.

Derek Griffin welcomes your enquiries for his business services, office supplies etc. You may have already met him at our Chamber lunch.

Matthew Cross, Hairdressing & Beauty Spa, 7 London Road Tel: 461988.

Relax and enjoy one of his many treatments on offer, you won't be disappointed. Matthew kindly gave the ladies at our December lunch a Privilege Card for the Beauty Spa.

I hear many have enjoyed the experience.

Jon Barlow is a photographer based in Sevenoaks tel: 07973 887145 if you require his professional touch, call him.

Savills (L & P) Ltd 74 High Street Tel: 789700 Theresa Wallace, Lettings & Management Dept.

Need accommodation or a new home? Call Savills.

Know Your Rights

Knowing your rights about internet shopping, refunds or complaining to a trader should soon be easier with a new consumer hotline “Consumer Direct”. It will deal with enquiries in the South East where there is a disagreement with unscrupulous traders, scams, warranties, internet shopping, refunds and replacements.

KCC in Maidstone will run the hotline across the South East for the next 5 years on behalf of the DTI. It will be backed-up by Kent Trading Standards officers and agencies like the CAB.

following Benefits

- Networking events, both locally and jointly with other Chambers of Commerce.
- Export Support and Information – Documentation & help-line. Trade Missions.
- Trade & Business Directories.
- Independent links and meetings with Sevenoaks District & Town Councils.
- Sevenoaks Town Partnership – instrumental in promoting Sevenoaks.
- Support of community forums, e.g. Police, Conservation and Citizens Advice.
- Regular Newsletters.
- The chamber maintains a permanent office and administration staff to assist in the smooth running and carrying out the Chamber activities.
- Chamber Discount Scheme for members' goods and services.

Why not join now.