

## Supporting local businesses during the recession

Wealden District Council held a Business Breakfast 'Survive and Thrive' which took place on Tuesday, 16th June 2009. The event was attended by representatives from local Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce, Town Councils and Town Partnerships. The aim of the event was threefold; to keep our partners informed about the impact of the recession across East Sussex, to answer questions in relation to how Wealden District Council is responding to the economic downturn and to prioritise initiatives that will support our local economy over the coming year.

The 'Survive and Thrive' Business Breakfast was an opportunity to discuss the challenges that Wealden's businesses are facing as a result of the recession and to explore solutions for our towns and businesses. Round table workshops gave attendees the opportunity to inform future priorities for the Council's response. Most delegates recognised the importance of keeping Wealden's high streets looking vibrant and one of the

key priorities for the coming months is to roll out the 'buy local, make a difference' campaign that is currently being piloted in Hailsham. In addition, attendees were also keen to see workshops aimed at helping retailers to attract additional footfall by making the most out of shop fronts and other initiatives.

A full copy of comments received will be posted on the Wealden website [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk). We plan to build upon the work that we are doing with partners and move forward by developing the ideas and initiatives that have come out of the 'Survive and Thrive' event.

**For more information on the Council's response to the recession please contact Claire Moran on 01892 602884 or email [claire.moran@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:claire.moran@wealden.gov.uk)**



### COMPANY FEATURE

## Crowborough retailer gets a makeover

Crowborough retailer Zest Gifts has recently been working with Metamorphosis who are providing in-store training through the Leadership and Management Grant available through Train to Gain. Jane Hunnam from Zest Gifts says of the in-store training course:

"The Customer Experience Enhancement session was a great eye opener; we gained some brilliant ideas to improve the overall look of our shop both externally and internally. There were some elements I already knew which were great to have reinforced and others I had never thought of.

Ellie (our Metamorphosis Trainer) has such a positive and open approach; she has a strategy that really makes you open your eyes to your business, as she turns your mind to the approach of your customers. I would say the experience far outweighed my expectations and we have seen sales increasing in certain areas where changes have taken place.

I would highly recommend this course to other retailers. It is very easy to become blinkered in the day-to-day running of your business, so to have someone like Ellie

come in with her professional, inspirational approach is breathtaking and immensely rewarding."

**Metamorphosis is a visual retail consultancy based in Nutley. Visit [www.metamorphosisgroup.co.uk](http://www.metamorphosisgroup.co.uk)**

**Zest Gifts is located in the Fernbank Centre, Crowborough High Street. Visit [www.zestgifts.com](http://www.zestgifts.com)**



*Window display, Zest Gifts, Crowborough.*

## Go Green to beat the **Crunch**:

Wealden District Council can now offer businesses even more opportunities for recycling their waste with the launch of a new mixed plastic bottles, cans, drinks cartons (Tetrapaks), aerosols and foil collection. This mixed collection is ideal for any business wanting to get rid of their lunchtime waste or for cafes, bars and food & drink outlets.

**Phone Waste Management on 01892 602626 to check suitability and access in your area.**

In addition to expanding its recycling collections to businesses, Wealden has pledged to help businesses save money and go green by freezing its cardboard collection charges at 2008-2009 prices with paper, cans, glass and mixed recycling collection charges increasing only slightly. Prices for recycling bins start from as little as £2.50.

In contrast the rising prices of trade waste collections fuelled by increases in landfill taxes means that businesses taking the time to separate and recycle their

waste can save money by setting up recycling collections and reducing the size of their trade waste bin.

With over 35 years of experience in collecting your business waste, Wealden is one of the most experienced and reliable contractors in the area with the most competitive prices. We offer flexible collections, on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. Unlike most other contractors we have no fixed term contracts and we charge only for the collection of the bin.

That means no hidden bin hire charges, admin costs or charges for Duty of Care certificates.

The average business spends up to 5% of its annual turnover on waste management costs, so effective recycling really can save your business money.

**Phone waste management to find out how you can save money for your business. Paper, glass, cans or mixed recycling on 01323 443404 or cardboard recycling on 01892 602626.**

### Voice of Business Survey 2009



Sussex Enterprise has recently published the results of their annual survey which highlights a number of issues which are affecting businesses in Sussex. 671 businesses took part from across the county. Here is a short extract from the findings:

- Businesses were asked about the greatest inhibitor to growth within their business at the moment. The main inhibitor is the combined effects of the recession (27%). Businesses are also concerned about their cashflow problems (15%).
- Businesses were asked what one action the Government must take to help businesses survive the recession. Better access to finance was a key message (23%) and tax incentives (e.g. lower taxation, rebates) (20%).

**For the full survey visit [www.sussexenterprise.co.uk](http://www.sussexenterprise.co.uk)**

### Business rates deferral scheme

The government has announced that it will bring forward regulations to enable businesses to defer payment of 60% of the increase in their business rates bill until 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The government has produced a fact sheet on the business rates deferral scheme which you can download at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk). The scheme is expected to be implemented by the end of July 2009 once the new regulations come into force.

**Examples of how the scheme could affect your business can be found at: [www.wealden.gov.uk/Business/Business\\_Rates/Index.aspx](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Business/Business_Rates/Index.aspx)**

### Immobilise National Property Register

Immobilise is the world's largest free register of property ownership details and with its sister site CheckMEND, it is the largest database of stolen property and blocked mobile phones. Immobilise can be used by members of the public and businesses to register their valued possessions or company assets.

Exclusive to Immobilise, all account holders' registered items and ownership details are viewable on the Police National Property Database and the National Mobile Property Register.

This online checking service is used by all the UK Police forces to trace owners of lost and stolen property. In addition Immobilise is checked daily by a huge range of recovery agencies and lost property offices. As a direct result of Immobilise there are over 250 cases a week where property is returned or information collected that assists the Police in investigating criminal activity involving stolen goods.

**For more information and to register your property visit [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)**

*Article provided by the Safer Wealden Partnership - working in partnership to create a safer community.*

Email [cdpadmin@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:cdpadmin@wealden.gov.uk) or visit [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)



THE SAFER WEALDEN  
PARTNERSHIP



## Locate East Sussex

Locate East Sussex promotes East Sussex as a quality business location, offering a range of services to businesses. Mike Cogswell is Location Services Manager for Locate East Sussex. We asked him about his role and how his work is impacting upon Wealden and its businesses.

### What is Locate East Sussex?

Locate East Sussex started life in 2004 as the County's 'inward investment organisation' or 'investor promotion agency' with the aim of promoting East Sussex as a business location, attracting businesses and helping to retain businesses already here.

In recent years the focus has changed somewhat to include working with landowners, developers, agents and local authorities to champion improvements to the commercial property offer.

### What services does Locate East Sussex provide?

A premises search is a key service but in practice this is only part of broad package of business support. Inward investment projects, where enquirers know very little about the area, can require me to prepare a great deal of information about training, grants, workforce, demographics, as well as property.

The website [www.locateeastsussex.org](http://www.locateeastsussex.org) has a vacant property database, a GIS based industrial estates directory and a promotional video about East Sussex. I hope to improve the website and make the property database more user-friendly over the next few months.

Locate also offers services to its local authority partners. I have commissioned extensive research on the viability of development sites across the County, provided advice to protect threatened employment sites, input into the new LDF planning process and even organised a course on property development – indeed, almost anything property related!

### How is Locate funded?

The six Local Authorities in East Sussex fund my employer, Ten Sixty Six Enterprise in Hastings, to deliver the Locate service through a service level agreement. I have sat at the same desk since 2004, although my employer has changed three times!

### Why should businesses be looking to locate in East Sussex?

The quality of life here is the main attractor for businesses and I often find that the business

owners who live here, get fed up with commuting, and decide to bring their businesses to East Sussex. The low cost-base means that this can be a value-for-money location within striking distance of London. Companies in sectors where East Sussex is strong (vacuum pumps, environmental technologies are examples) get real benefits from locating where there is a pool of expertise.

The high quality of support offered by the enterprise agencies (EDEAL in Wealden) also enables those starting-up in business to put plans into reality.

### What are the main obstacles you face in promoting East Sussex as a quality business location?

Indifferent road connections and the quality and choice of commercial premises are the main challenge although recently a number of good property schemes have come forward. Improvements to East Sussex's road network – both North/South and East/West – would improve the marketability of its development sites and encourage more commercial developers to build here.

I also think we should be making a much wider business audience aware of the benefits of locating to such a beautiful part of the world – although marketing can be an expensive business!

### How has the recession affected the demand for business premises?

In 2009 new enquiries logged are sharply up on the same period over the two previous years. There is evidence that some sectors remain relatively unaffected by the recession with business confidence high enough to seize opportunities thrown up by the economic conditions. Most interest is in industrial rather than offices and, with lending tight, leasehold rather than freehold. The better weather has also increased optimism!

The trigger for this activity is generally a lease coming to an end with companies willing to risk moving for the reasons given. There is evidence that companies are often downsizing business premises.

*continued overleaf*





## What is Locate's most recent investment success in Wealden

I worked closely with Crowborough based accountancy practice Christopher Lunn & Co and put together an employment case to help the company in its plans to expand on site. Planning permission was granted in April 2009 for its existing premises to be increased from 5,000 sq.ft. to about 10,000 sq.ft. When completed, the development at Boars Head will enable it to employ about 70 staff members (up from 56) in East Sussex, the HQ for a national network of offices.

## What do you most enjoy about your job?

The variety! I am involved in a broad range of absorbing projects, some of which I have had the opportunity to initiate – which is particularly rewarding.

I enjoy meeting enterprising people and am always surprised by the diversity and sheer quality of the businesses domiciled here.

**You can find out more about Locate East Sussex at: [www.locateeastsussex.org](http://www.locateeastsussex.org)**

## Flu Pandemic update



Following the first confirmed case of Swine Flu locally, NHS Brighton and Hove and West Sussex Primary Care Trust are working closely with the Health Protection Agency to reduce any spread of the infection.

The total number of confirmed cases in the United Kingdom is now over 2,500. We are

fortunate to have time to plan for a possible seasonal increase in the autumn.

Businesses need to think about how ready they would be to deal with serious interruption. A significant reduction in staff through sickness, caring for others, or just to limit spread, could be difficult. But not if you have plans in place to keep the vital parts of your business going.

Business Continuity Planning is about being as ready as you realistically can be for situations out of your control.

As well as flu, these could be fire, flooding, interruption in electricity supply, or just failure in ICT systems. On the day of writing this one third of our Pine Grove offices had no electricity supply!

Disruption to supplies could also affect your business, as suppliers and transport services can also be hit by serious staff absences and other crises.

Having a plan and knowing where to concentrate your effort to keep your business going has got to be worthwhile. These plans are best made when you are not in a crisis situation.

To help you find the support and resources available visit our Business Continuity pages on [www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk).

We also have a number of free DVDs on Business Survival – produced by the Sussex Resilience Forum (the Local Authority Emergency Planning group).



**Visit our website, ring us on 01323 443302 or contact [foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk) if you want to know more.**

## Shaping our future – meeting our vision

From 6 July 2009 we will be consulting on a document called **Core Strategy – Spatial Development Options** which is a significant step in the preparation of the next generation of planning policies for Wealden.



It sets out our vision and aims for the future and suggests a number of alternative strategies for the distribution of housing and employment development across the District over the next 20 years.

The Council is not yet committed to any particular option – that's why we want your views!

### Play your part in shaping Wealden's future . . .

From 6 July 2009 the document (and supporting papers) will be available on the Council's website [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk). We would encourage you to consider the consultation documents and send us your views.

# COSTS – Company Operator Safer Transport Scheme

**Almost 30% of all collisions on Sussex roads which leave participants either dead or seriously injured involve business drivers. Are you doing enough to protect your workforce, and your company, on the roads?**

Whether your employees are driving their own car or the firm's delivery vehicle, popping between meetings or making long haul deliveries, statistically almost 30% of them could be killed or left seriously injured. And you, as a company owner, director or manager, could be held liable for a

manslaughter prosecution, especially if you are unaware of the laws regarding driving at work, don't have regularly reviewed driver policies or know who is responsible for implementing these procedures.

This has all come from the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007, which came into force in April 2008. Under the Act, companies or organisations can be convicted in the event of one of their employees being killed or seriously injured while driving for work, if it's found that there have been gross failures in the way that activities have been managed to reduce that risk.

The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership is running the COSTS – Company Operator Safer Transport Scheme to give you the tools you need to reduce the road risk faced by your employees. Through the partnership's website you can gain a better understanding of the risks



and legal requirements that you face as a company owner, and what steps you can take to protect your business and reduce those risks.

The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership has also produced a COSTS Manager's Pack containing a guide for directors and managers giving information and advice on how to develop a "safe driving at work policy" with risk assessments and driver training. Packs can be requested by email: [costs@sussexsaferroads.gov.uk](mailto:costs@sussexsaferroads.gov.uk)

## **Sussex Safer Roads**

P A R T N E R S H I P

**For more information contact Keith Sinden, Costs Project Manager for East Sussex on 0782 333 0614 or email [keithsinden@googlemail.com](mailto:keithsinden@googlemail.com).**

**Or visit [www.sussexsaferroads.gov.uk/COSTS](http://www.sussexsaferroads.gov.uk/COSTS)**

## Concerned about your housing situation?

The housing department at Wealden provides various services ranging from housing management of its own Council owned properties, working with the private sector to giving housing advice.

### **Accessing Council or housing association housing**

Anyone can join the Council's housing register. Applicants are placed in one of four priority bands based on their housing needs. Once on the housing register, applicants bid for available properties that they would like to be considered for and properties are then allocated from a shortlist of bidders according to band, local connection (if in a rural parish) and the length of time they have been waiting.

### **Housing Advice**

The Council provides free advice to anyone in housing need. Advice is tailored to the customers current housing situation and their personal circumstances. We always try to help them maintain their current tenancy if possible or help them find alternative housing. We work closely with other agencies to try and provide the best solution for the customer.

### **Homeless?**

If someone approaches the Council because they are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will arrange an appointment for them to see a Housing Options Officer. The initial appointment will explore what options may be

available to them in order to prevent them becoming homeless or to find them alternative accommodation. These options include:

- Liaison or mediation with a landlord or family member
- Advice about security of tenure
- Raising their income or benefit entitlements
- Mortgage advice and mortgage rescue scheme
- Advice about accessing the private rented sector

**Please contact the Housing Options team on 01323 443322 for advice if you have any concerns about your housing situation or visit [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)**

## INOM MANAGEMENT TIP

### ***Do you get frustrated that delegated tasks are often not done to the required standard?***

If so, when delegating, try to take a coaching approach with your staff. When you give them tasks, agree with them how you will monitor their progress. You should agree a monitoring process that lets you see what they are doing before they have completed the task. You can then give them the benefit of your guidance before they have finished. This ensures that you get the result that you want and enables your staff to learn from your experience.

In the short term, effective delegation takes time and effort, but in the long term it reduces time fire fighting and allows managers to focus on more strategic issues.

**If you have any managers or supervisors who would benefit from training visit [www.inom.co.uk](http://www.inom.co.uk) or contact Mark Greasley at Inom Ltd.**

**Email [mark.greasley@inom.co.uk](mailto:mark.greasley@inom.co.uk) or phone 01892 669775**

[www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk)

The first step for  
small businesses

[wealdenbusinesshelp](http://wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk) 

## Sussex Internship Programme

The Sussex Internship Programme will be providing 100 internships at a wide variety of games, web, software development, animation, TV, e-learning, music, film and advertising companies.

Interns receive a 30 day work placement, additional training, access to top industry professionals and a grant. Participating companies get carefully selected top notch graduate talent and support in making the most of them during the programme.

**The Sussex Internship Programme is a partnership programme led by Wired Sussex and the University of Sussex. For more information visit [www.sussexinternshipprogramme.co.uk](http://www.sussexinternshipprogramme.co.uk)**

## Advertise your business free of charge

Over 1000 local business have registered on the Wealden Online Business Directory. If your company is not listed, log onto: [www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk/business\\_directory](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk/business_directory). Using the online form you can add information on products & services, contact details and a link to your website. Reach hundreds of local suppliers and customers by making sure your business is listed. If your business is already listed, please take a moment to check your listing is accurate and up-to-date. By submitting a new online form we can ensure that your entry is updated. **For more information please contact the Economic Development & Tourism Team – details below.**

## For all Economic Development / Business Enquiries contact

### **Business Rates**

Tel: 01323 443387  
Email: [businessrates@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:businessrates@wealden.gov.uk)

### **Business Regulation Adviser**

Tel: 01323 443276  
Email: [businesshelp@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:businesshelp@wealden.gov.uk)

### **Economic Development & Tourism**

Tel: 01892 602887  
Email: [regeneration@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@wealden.gov.uk)

### **Environmental Health**

Tel: 01323 443302  
Email: [env.health@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@wealden.gov.uk)

### **Procurement**

Tel: 01323 443350  
Email: [procurement@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@wealden.gov.uk)

### **LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT:**

**Business Link Sussex**  
0845 036 0 144

### **EDEAL**

01323 489800

### **Sussex Enterprise**

0845 678 8 867

Wealden Business Focus is published four times a year. If you would like to feature an article or raise a particular business issue for discussion, please submit details by **Monday 17th August 2009**. Please email information if possible to: [regeneration@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@wealden.gov.uk), otherwise post to the Economic Development & Tourism Section, Wealden District Council, The Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1DH.

Wealden District Council aims to provide accurate, up-to-date information, however, it does not endorse any company featured in this publication.

*"You get a great deal with Wealden"*

[www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk)

[www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)

[www.enjoysussex.info](http://www.enjoysussex.info)



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Portfolio Holder for Community  
Cllr Ron Cussons

Director of Environmental Services  
Michael J Fleming

This newsletter is available in large print on request