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Welcome

to this issue of the Chamber's newsletter.

This month's newsletter is kindly sponsored by

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest edition of the Didcot Chamber of Commerce Newsletter. This is a bi-monthly publication to keep you up to date on Chamber activities, new members and local business news and events. It will be posted on the Chamber website and past issues archived there for easy reference.

As a member you can submit information for inclusion in the newsletter by e-mail to Fiona Smart at events@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

Copy dates are:

27th July edition: Copy submission by 17th July

28th Sept edition: Copy submission by 18th July

23rd November edition: Copy submission by 13th November

Chamber Business Meetings are held bi-monthly with the next one scheduled on Wednesday 24th June from 6pm - 8pm at Lydalls Rd Hall.

Business networking events are held on alternate months and are an opportunity for members and non-members to come along to meet other local businesses. The next Business Networking event will be a summer social in July with details to be confirmed nearer the time.



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE FROM GLYN HALL, CFL

This report opens with two appeals. Firstly the Chamber has set its sights on significantly increasing the number of members we have, and secondly raising funds for this year's Street Fair. A number of members are already pro-active and achieving results and I would ask all members to keep these two aims in mind. Encouraging local businesses to support us gives the Chamber greater profile too.

The Chamber ran a successful golf day on the 8th May, in support of the outgoing Mayor's Charities which included the Street Fair Fund. Soon after, I had the pleasure of attending the new Mayor's dinner for Margaret Turner, who has now taken up her new post.

I recently presented at the 'Making Money out of Climate Change' event held by Didcot First, the FSB and Business Link at Cornerstone. Dave Roberts of Concept Filming, a Chamber member captured the evening on video and I managed to talk to fellow presenter and a Director of Amey to ask if they would consider joining the Chamber.

During May I also attended a public meeting held at Didcot Football Club, where the idea was floated for a new Parish Council for Ladygrove. Unfortunately the meeting was poorly attended, apart from Conservative Didcot Town Council Members, but it has helped initiate community discussion on the topic. On a more social note and on a sporting theme, my wife and I took part in an enjoyable Manor School Race Night where I had the opportunity to give Chamber a mention as well as sponsor one of the races. The format of the evening gave me plenty of ideas for future fundraising efforts by the Chamber!

Jeannette Howse ran a bric-a-brac stall for the Street Fair on Bank Holiday Monday at the Harwell Feast, selling the many donations kindly supplied by the business community. It resulted in £80 for the Street Fair fund and was supported by other Chamber members who helped run the stall.

The new Chamber committee has had its first meeting to discuss roles, responsibilities and future objectives. It's still work in progress but was very positive and a good start. New webmaster Dave Roberts updated the team on the work he's been doing to the Chamber website so make sure you keep an eye out for latest postings of news, reports, AGM Minutes and events.

Sadly Didcot is not immune from the recession and one of our members JNF Employment has been hit by the current economic conditions and will be closing its doors. This only serves to highlight the need for us to support each other at every possible opportunity.

Yours,

Glyn



NEW CHAMBER COMMITTEE

At the April AGM five new Committee members joined the existing team, taking the number to nine. Members were nominated and seconded at the AGM.

Members of the Chamber of Commerce Committee are:

President	Glyn Hall	CFL
Vice President	Jude Cavell	Taylor and Francis
Treasurer	Mike Foster	A1 Group
Chairman	David Peirson	Vilitas Office Solutions
Deputy Chairman & Press Officer	Jeanette Howse	Well Preserved
Event Manager	Fiona Smart	FRS Marketing
Membership Secretary	Sarah Scott	Meeson Williams Ltd
Minute Secretary	Jayne Parker	Hedges Solicitors
Web Manager	David Roberts	Concept Films

Reduced Chamber membership fee :

The Chamber carried a unanimous vote at the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 25th February 2009 to introduce a flat fee structure for all members of just £50. Formerly this rate only applied to small businesses but is now applicable to all.

The change was brought about to stimulate sign up to and membership of the Chamber, helping to strengthen the voice of businesses in and around the Didcot area.

Membership renewals were due in May, once the new Membership fee had been decided, so please check that you have paid your annual fee of £50. We still have some Members who have not amended the amount of their Standing Order over recent years to take account of Membership fee changes. Therefore if you pay by Standing Order please check that you have paid the correct amount of £50 and, if not, please forward payment to the Treasurer for the amount required to complete your Membership renewal.

New businesses can join the Chamber by signing up at the Chamber website at:

www.didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk



NEWSLETTER SPONSOR – BUSINESS PROFILE

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Our current offer will keep you sweet as we're giving away a free Cadbury's Variety Bag on all orders over the value of £30 for x period. We also provide a money back guarantee on your purchases and our delivery service if you are not completely satisfied.

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NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

DIDCOT AUTO-CENTRE

Are you tired of paying expensive dealer service and maintenance prices?

We can maintain the dealer warranty, but save you the expense.

Didcot Auto Centre was established 6 years ago in our modern 4,880 sq ft premises. We provide car and light commercial vehicle servicing, repairs and MOT testing. Over the years we have specialised in BMW and Mercedes but are able to handle any make or model of vehicle.

At Didcot Autocentre we go out of our way to make the customer feel welcome. Our premises are smart and clean with ample parking and a luxurious waiting area. We aim to take the pain out of having your car serviced and can save you time and hassle by providing the following:

- One of our free courtesy cars
- Drop off and collection of customers from a local destination
- Collect and return a car from your home or workplace

We make no claims to be the cheapest, but we will give you a fair quote for the work which will be adhered to - and top quality service. Our customers are kept fully informed of progress and have no nasty surprises when they come to collect their cars.

We also take care to send you a reminder for your MOT in plenty of time. Now that MOT's are computerised, the police will know exactly when your MOT has expired, so it is even more important to keep things up to date.

We look forward to receiving your call on **01235 816 192**

TALKING BUSINESS

This section offers Chamber members an opportunity to recommend businesses they've worked with. It could highlight the solution they provided or other positive aspects such as their attention to detail or customer support.

This month Glyn Hall kicks off the section with some business feedback he found useful:

As a member of the Chamber since 1986, my company has seen one and a half cycles of world economic change. One thing hasn't changed though and that's being able to share your business issues with other



Chamber members who are experts in their fields.

Over the last 2 months I have shared information, firstly with Sarah Scott at Meeson Williams and secondly with Fiona Smart at FRS Marketing, both members of Didcot Chamber of Commerce. I asked Sarah the question about my current building lease and the proposed increase the landlord intended for renewal. With Sarah's advice we managed to negotiate a longer lease at a reduced cost over the period. So it paid to talk, or rather it saved to talk!

My conversation with Fiona highlighted a few home truths about marketing and the importance of a well designed, usable website - for people and search engines! With Fiona's help we've now identified a number of website improvements and she has introduced us to a fresh contact who can help us on the web promotion side.

I wanted to share this with you because there's a wealth of accumulated business knowledge among our Chamber membership that can be tapped into, as well as a wider local network of businesses in Didcot that can advise us on all aspects of our businesses. I would encourage you to use local suppliers where you can, with the added benefit it offers of supporting our own local economy.

Glyn Hall, CFL

DIDCOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - EVENTS

Thanks go to the Cargo team in Didcot for hosting the May Business Networking evening at their store. Due to half term and an important football match, a select group gathered to meet other businesses, enjoy some nibbles and have a browse of the latest Cargo ranges inclusive of a tempting 21% discount!

Don't forget to pencil in a diary date for the next Business Networking Event on Wednesday 29th July. It will be a summer social and details will be posted on the website and circulated nearer the time.

Local Business Events Coming Your Way

Business and Community Awards (BACA'S)

The BACA's is a new initiative being launched by Didcot First and they are looking for input from Businesses, Community Groups and individuals.

The Didcot based awards will recognize and reward those who stand out from the crowd and make positive differences and is open to both business and community groups. A prestigious award ceremony will take place in October to announce the winners and conclude the awards.

There are 4 categories for nominations and each will have one business winner and one community



winner. Individuals are not eligible to enter unless they are working as a sole trader.

- Ethical Trading
- Customer Service
- Positive Promotion
- Community Involvement

Application packs will be available during the first week of July and the closing date for nominations will be in September. Interest can be pre-registered by e-mail at: mail@didcotfirst.org.uk, putting BACAs in the subject line.

Active Didcot Sunday: – Sunday 7th June

This year, the Didcot Street Olympix and Didcot Volunteer Day have joined forces to stage a special 'Active Didcot Sunday' that encourages local people to get physically active and also socially involved by volunteering for different groups. The event takes place on Sunday 7th June in the Orchard Centre, Didcot from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm.

Any organizations looking for new members or volunteers can sign up for a stand or a demonstration slot by contacting Di@didcotfirst.org.uk or text/call on 07771 590 244

Street Fair:

The Street Fair Committee members are busy raising funds for this year's Street Fair on Thursday 26th November. £16,000 is needed to pay for the event. On Monday 25th May we had a stand at Harwell Feast selling donated bric a brac and we are planning to attend other events too. If you can offer any more bric a brac or items for a tombola stand please let Jeanette Howse know.

The planning has begun and this year the theme will focus on the works of Charles Dickens. We are really pleased to have his Great Great Grandson Gerald Dickens at the event. Santa will therefore be green again as was tradition 150 years before Coca Cola turned him red. Entertainers are being booked and meetings held to discuss what can be improved this year. The Old Market Place will be a transformed into a traditional Dickensian Square with costumed people, stalls, chestnuts and snow! This is being done with the help of Chamber Member Michelle Lightfoot of Simply Facilities who manages the Market Square.

If you want to do something in your area of the Broadway or Orchard Centre please let the Committee know.

We have entered the 2008 Christmas Street Fair into community award scheme for Market Towns. The result will be known mid-June.

Media:

The Chamber of Commerce supported the Thames Valley Farmers Market in their bid to continue holding a monthly market in the Orchard Centre. Assett Factor, the new Management Company for the



Orchard Centre want to raise the annual fee from £325 to £4,485. May's market was held after a fee of £325 was paid and meetings are ongoing with Asset Factor. If you want to keep the Farmers Market in Didcot please email you support to Didcot Chamber of Commerce or The Didcot Herald. The story was covered across all media including the Oxford Mail, Herald, Bill Heine, News Radio Oxford and BBC TV News.

President Glyn Hall was asked to comment on a Carnival being revived. He wisely reported that Carnivals take a considerable amount of work and have a heightened health and safety procedure compared to 40 years ago. The Chamber's Christmas Street Fair takes a year to organise and another team would be required to organise another event. This was covered in the Oxford Mail and Didcot Herald.

ALSO

Request for office space:

The Chamber has been contacted by Libby Haydon, Manager of the developing Children's Centre on the Ladygrove estate (attached to All Saints Primary School).

She and her Centre worker currently have no office space and are keen to find some for a let of around a year. They need it to be in the Didcot area, ideally as close to Ladygrove as possible and to have a room with electricity, phone access etc. They can arrange furniture and wi-fi internet access.

If anyone can help please contact Libby Haydon on 07766 913156 or email her at: elizabeth.haydon@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Office to let:

JNF Employment will soon be vacating their premises on Edinburgh Drive. The office is up for let and is at a prime location in central Didcot, next to a public car park. It comprises:

- Approx 352 sq Ft
- Suitable as a shop or office (A1 & A2 Use)
- Available as a short term lease or for a longer term

Anyone interested should contact Julian Allen- 07909-914916



Regulations/Legal updates

In this section we will aim to include notices of regulations or legal updates that may be relevant to your business. Hyperlinks are in blue text.

Source: *Withy King Solicitors*

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS

Working in Britain from overseas?

New online advice and guidance for international workers and their employers.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers/index.htm?ebul=hsegen/25-mar-2008&cr=6>

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

RSI Awareness Day

HSE launches new site, find out about working with VDU's, case studies, DSE regulations?

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/index.htm?ebul=hsegen/03-mar-2008&cr=6>

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments

New examples for a poultry farm, plastering company, call centre, private hire and dry cleaners.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/index.htm?ebul=hsegen/25-feb-2008&cr=6>

Planning Applications

Planning applications from SODC can be viewed at:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/>

If you become aware of a news item that other chamber members may find useful, please send the details to: editor@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk and we'll include it in our next newsletter.

